

# Decision-Making Style of the Educational Administrators of Higher Secondary Schools with Reference to the type of Institution

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to find out the decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district with reference to the type of institution. A purely descriptive survey design was applied to conducting the study. A sample of 30 educational administrators of both government and private higher secondary schools were selected by applying stratified random sampling from Lakhimpur district. In the study, the investigator used "Decision - Making Style Scale" developed by Noorjehan N. Garnihar (2005) to collect data. Collected data were analyzed with the help of Percentage Analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, graphical representation and Test of Significance (t-test). The results of the study revealed that heuristic style is the most preferred style of decision making among the higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district and the study further revealed that a significant difference was there in the decision - making style of the administrators with reference to the type of institution.

## Keywords

Decision - Making Style, Educational Administrators, Higher Secondary Schools, Type of Institution.

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## Introduction

Decision-making is an indispensable component of an administrator's life and educational administration is not an exceptional one. The principal or the headmaster of an educational institution is considered as an administrative head as well as a higher authority. The improvement of an educational institution is dependent on the decision-making skills of the administrative head. Decision making is an art of making choices. It is the process of choosing the best decision among the alternatives. In this context, Guleck (2006) said decision making is the process of thought and deliberation that leads to a decision. (as cited in Shah. 2018) Decision making is a way of achieving desired results which is consciously chosen and as the principal or headmaster of an institution is having the higher authority so, he/she must be conscious while taking decisions. As an institutional head, we cannot ignore the role of the administrator's while talking about decision making. The administrator of the institution can be defined as a leader who will direct its work. In this context Arne Duncane, (2014) US Secretary of Education said that "There are no good schools without good headmasters, it just doesn't exist." (as cited in Debnath, J. & Sultana, Y. 2020) because the success and development of the school depend on the skill and competencies of making appropriate decisions of the school administrator. A skill-less administrator of a school is similar to a ship without a rudder. So, the efficiency, alertness, originality and experience of the administrator help to determine the success of the school. The higher authority should be learned person and should have faith in himself, in his profession, in his staff and in his pupils so that he can maintain a proper human relationship with all concerned.

One of the important dimensions of the principals' administrative behaviour is decision making. It can be considered as a day to day activity in the life of the administrators because the administrators cannot be described without decision making. The principal holds a

key position in the organization and management system and decision making is the central job of the management body. So, an efficient administrator must be a good decision-maker. He should pose certain qualities for successful decision making. He should be able to take decisions at the right moment, as soon as quickly as possible, he should be able to provide necessary help whenever required etc. are some of the essential qualities of an administrator as a good decision-maker. Therefore, the success of the institution fully depends upon the decision making policies and strategies taken by the administrator of the school.

Administrators and decision making can be explained as two sides of the same coin, without one another cannot be completed. As educational institutions deal with human beings therefore, the administrators who manage the educational institution should have a deep and expert knowledge of decision making. Decision making is the most crucial aspect of educational management. The most important quality of being an administrative head is having a profound knowledge of decision making and be able to make effective decisions. According to George and Jones (2000) "The access of any organization depends on managers' abilities to make effective decisions." So, it can be said that administrators and decision making are interrelated with each other.

## Educational administrators

The principal is considered the keystone of the arch of the school administration. He is given the prime responsibility to lead the school. As an important component of the school administration, the headmaster has certain important roles and responsibilities to play. The efficiency of the school depends on the ability and skill, personality and professional competency of the administrators because he has an influential role to play for the development and success of the school. The head of the institution directly or indirectly

responsible for anything and everything happens in the school.

Administrators of the school may be described as the sun around which all the components of the school revolves. According to Ryburn administrators of an institution holds a key position like a captain of a ship, he makes plans, execute the plans, distribute works and coordinates the activities. The smooth functioning and continuous development of the school depends on the personality of the principal or administrator. The success of the school system depends upon his efficiency, alertness, originality and experience. An administrative head is the leader and centre of the whole organization of the school.

The administrator of an institution is the main authority of the institution both academically and administratively. So, he should be a great head. He must have a good qualification in general education as well as in professional training. He should be learned person and should have faith in himself, in his profession, in his staff and in his pupils so, that he can maintain a proper human relationship with all concerned.

### Decision making

Decision making can be considered as an integral part of life. Even it can be considered as a day to day activity of life because people make decisions in every walk of their life. An individual makes hundreds of decisions in a day. (Ressler & Ahrens, 2005). A decision is a result of at least two or more choices and alternatives. A good decision is always an end product of high intention, honest effort, intelligent direction and proficient execution (Gupta, 2015). A good decision represents a wise choice among many alternatives.

Decision making is defined to be a mental process where an idea or action is selected among other options (Byrnes, 2002). Within this process, our needs, desires, goals, values and lifestyles are effective and decisive as well as the recognition and definition of the options. Every decision making first involves uncertainty and every decision involves more and less a risk (Lee, 2017).

Decision making is a process of making judgments or reaching a conclusion. It can be defined as a rational choice or conscious selection among the available alternatives but it may not be rational every time rather judgmental and emotional in which personal preferences and values of the decision-maker play a significant role. It can be considered as a goal-oriented or goal-directed process because it seems that the decision-maker attempts to achieve some results through decision making.

### Educational administrators and Decision making

As an important component of the school administration, the principal has important roles and responsibilities to play and decision making is one kind of responsibilities among them. Being a higher authority, decision making is like taking oxygen. It is like a central job of the administrators. Educational institutions can be considered as a complex organization as they are dealing with human beings at every level. In this context the decision - making style of the administrators will play an important role in shaping their

future life so, the administrator should have a piece of deep and expert knowledge and skills in decision making.

In the school management, the administrator holds a key position and decision making is an indispensable part of the management system and making decisions is a kind central job of the administrator so they need to choose constantly what is to be done, who is to do when to do, where to do and how to do. Moore (1778) stated that "Management means decision making ". As decision making is an indispensable part of the management system that is why an administrator's life filled with making decisions after decisions.

Since decision making involves one's competence, his personality makes up, besides administrative orientation and for that the head of the personality which helps him to accommodate all choirs when a particular situation allows them to rise. While making decisions one should be skilled and competent. The Administration is not just a position it is a responsibility. Student achievement, academic progress and development of the school all these things depend on the decision making of the headmaster. Many time wrong decisions taken by the administrator can hamper the student life, their academic achievement because each and everything around the school directly or indirectly related with the student. Just a single decision may have a great significance in the student academic life.

The administrator is the academic and administrative head of the institution around which the operations of the institution revolve. An administrator can be considered as the main body for organizing and directing the things he is supposed to take several decisions. So, in that context, one can say that decision making is an integral part of the principal's life as an administrative head.

Making good decisions is another challenge in an administrator's life because good decisions encourage individuals to recognize and pick preferences constructed on the standards and likings of the decision-maker and wrong decision may hamper the whole school. If a correct decision is made, it empowers the capacities of life to continue without complications. A good decision is always an outcome of a high intention, intelligence, logical reasoning and of course skills and competencies of making correct choices or selecting best alternatives. So, being the head and main authority of the school one should be skilled and competent in selecting the best alternatives.

### The rationale of the study

The principal of the educational institution is considered as the administrative head that is bound to make decisions every moment. Decision making is one of the major aspects of an administrator's leadership behaviour. Based on the administrators the style of decision making may vary like routine, heuristic and compromise style and based on the style the environment of the school changes like- hostile, friendly, cooperative, consultative and autocratic etc. The development of the educational institution primarily depends on the decision being taken the administrators i.e. the principal of that institution in this context George and Jones (2000) said that the success of any institution primarily depends on the decision making ability of the managers. To take a good decision the administrator must be

emotionally sound and physically well adjusted with himself or herself because of the higher secondary level of education is a very crucial stage which can decide students future career opportunities. From higher secondary stage only students give preferences to their future profession. From that point of view, it can be considered as a foundation stage for a student's professional life. So, the decision of higher secondary school principals will impact the student's academic career. Therefore, the need for the present study is important.

The study is mainly focused to identify the most preferred decision -making style among the higher secondary school administrators Lakhimpur district and to investigate whether the type of institution can be a factor that may influence the decision - making style. The introduction and literature review gives a clear picture that decision making is an indispensable component of the administrator's leadership behaviour. An observation is being made before conducting the study on the academic achievements of the students of higher secondary level and the observation revealed that the academic achievements of private institutions are far better than the government school. Kumar (2010) found in his study that the leadership behaviour private institutions posse was better than the government institutions. (as cited in Shah 2018) The decision - making style of the secondary school administrators is being studied based on three parameters – routine, compromise and heuristic style. Every parameter had certain characteristics which distinguish one from another and following a particular style will reveal the effectiveness of an administrator's decision - making skills. The reviews made it clear that decision - making style is one of the important factors of institutional effectiveness which affect the development of the institution as well as students academic achievement. The reviews further showed that an attempt of studying decision - making style of the secondary school headmasters was taken but no studies have conducted on the higher secondary level in Assam and Lakhimpur regarding the decision - making style so, the present study is very necessary. The findings of the present study will help the administrators of the higher secondary level to develop an optimum understanding of different types of decision making styles and influence of the type of institution in their decision.

### Objectives of the study

- i. To study the decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district.
- ii. To study the decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district with reference to the type of institution.

### Hypotheses of the study

- i. There is a significant difference in the decision - making style of the secondary school administrators with reference to the type of institution.

## The methodology of the study

### Method

The design of the study was based on a descriptive survey model which falls under the category of quantitative research. Descriptive survey design helps to examine educational phenomena in terms of the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held by the students, teachers, parents and experts, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. Because of the apparent ease and directness of this method, a researcher can gather information in terms of an individual's opinion about some issue by a simple questionnaire. (Koul, L, pp105).

### Population and sample

According to Kerlinger (1984), "The term population and universe means all the members of any – defined class of people, events or objects." and a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. The purpose of selecting samples is representing the population. The population of the study includes 57 higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district. From 57 higher secondary schools total 40 schools were selected as a sample by applying simple random sampling technique among which 20 were government and 20 were private higher secondary schools.

### Data collection tool

Decision - Making Style Scale (DMSS) was used and developed by Noorjehan N. Garnihar (2005) to study the decision making styles being followed by the administrators of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district. The tool covers four problem areas of Decision making.

- i. Entrepreneurial problems
- ii. Administrative problems
- iii. Academic problems
- iv. Personnel problems.

The scale has 48 items related to the mentioned dimensions of decision making. The test score can help the investigator to find out the Decision - making style being followed by the headmaster. The reliability of the Decision - Making Style Scale was computed using the split-half method of reliability. Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was used for split-half reliability and it shows that reliability of the scale was 0.86.

The test was given and repeated on a group of 110 principals of secondary schools and the correlation was computed between the first and second sets of scores by using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The test-retest reliability for the Decision - Making Style Scale was found to be 0.88 with a time gap of four weeks between the two administrations.

### Data Analysis

The received scores from the scale were calculated to answer the relevant questions, evaluate outcomes and to

check the hypothesis. Highest 48 scores can be attained by each sample and the lowest can be 15 approximately.

To study the decision-making style percentage analysis was administered and the result was shown with a pie chart. For the second objective t-test was administered at 5% significance level and the result was shown with a pie and bar diagram.

## Discussion of the study

### Discussion related to the objective – 1

The study found that only 10% of administrators of the higher secondary school of Lakhimpur district were following the routine style of decision making. Routine decision making is like making decisions for everyday life. It requires no or little consideration. In this type of decision making the educational administrators follows the same kind of decision year after year. The nature of the routine decision-making style is repetitive because the administrators follow the same process of making decisions in every situation. Debnath. & Sultana. (2020) found in their study that none of the headmasters of high school was following the routine style of decision making. So, it can be said that the routine style of decision making is the least preferred style among the higher secondary school administrators. The result of the study showed that 35% of administrators of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district were following compromise style of decision making. In an educational institution through the principal is considered as an administrative head but in the decision-making process some other people can also be included like – management committee and when the principal will consider the viewpoints of other members in the decision-making process that will be considered as compromise style of decision making. Different viewpoints in the decision-making process help the decision making to choose the best decision from the alternations. In compromise style of decision making helps to create a friendlier environment in the organization because when every member will be given an equal opportunity in sharing views they will feel valued in the organization, which may improve the productivity among the subordinates. Shah. (2018) states that junior headmasters rely more on compromise style of decision making than senior headmasters. Mahajan. (2016) found in his study that less experienced headmasters prefer the participative style of decision making. Sarkar. (2015) states that headmasters working in a friendly climate are very much satisfied with their job. Abwalla. (2014) found that the majority of headmasters' follows the compromise style of decision making because they conduct a meeting before taking any decision regarding the institution. The study further revealed that the most preferred decision-making style of higher secondary school administrators of Lakhimpur district was the heuristic style of decision making. 55% of administrators found to be followed by the heuristic style of decision making. Heuristic style of decision making is considered as a creative type of making choices, where the administrators get full freedom of taking decisions. As a higher authority of the institution, they explore the decision-making process individually. Shah. (2018) found that senior headmasters of high school were

following the heuristic style of decision making. Muluku. & Orodho. (2017) found in their study that regarding students academic purpose, school improvement and monitoring of the institution headmaster take the crucial decision. Wilhelmena. (2011) states that the only headmaster plays a major role in making decisions. Hence, the following studies support the findings of the present study.

### Discussion related to the objective – 2

Table 3 Significance of mead difference of decision - making style of higher secondary educational administrators.

Category	N	%	Mean	df	't' Stat	Critical 't' value	Remarks
Government Institution	20	50%	24.95	38	3.193	2.024	Rejected at 5% significance level
Private Institution	20	50%	29.75				

The findings of the second objective revealed that there was a difference in the decision-making style of government and private higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district. The Mean of the private institution (29.75) was higher than the Mean of government institution (24.95). Based on the difference in decision - making style the null hypothesis was rejected that there is no significant difference between the decision - making style of education administrators of the higher secondary school of Lakhimpur district. The reason of significant difference of decision - making style maybe because the majority of the administrators of higher secondary schools of the private institution were following the heuristic style of decision making, on the other hand, the number of administrators following heuristic and compromise style of decision making were same. Heuristic style of decision making is more explorative, compromise style is a more participative and routine style of decision making does not require much consideration, evaluation and analysis while choosing the best alternatives. Vasanthi. (2015) found that regarding academic decision making a significant difference was there in the decision making of the headmistress with reference to their type of institution. Barpujari. (2017) found in her study that principals of the private institution had high administrative and active behaviour compared to principals of the provincialised institution. But Majid. & Mattoo. (2018) found that administrators of private institution prefer routine and compromise style and administrators of public institution prefer the heuristic style of decision making while solving problems regarding academic, personal, entrepreneurial and administrative.

## Findings of the study

The purpose of conducting the study was to find out the decision -making style followed by the educational administrators i.e., the principals of higher secondary schools of Lakhimpur district and to investigate that based on the type or nature of the institution the decision - making style of the administrators varies or not. The findings of the study were given as per the objectives.

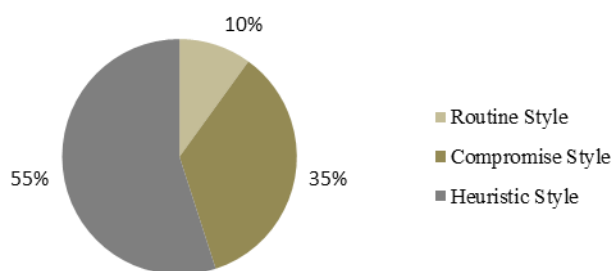


### Decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools

The scores acquired by the administrators on the "Decision Making Style Scale" were tabulated below

<b>Table 1:</b> Decision making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools		
Types of decision - making style	Total number of administrators under each category	Percentage acquired by the administrators
Routine Style	4	10%
Compromise Style	14	35%
Heuristic Style	22	55%

**Percentage acquired by the administrators of higher secondary schools under each style**



**Figure 1:** Decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools

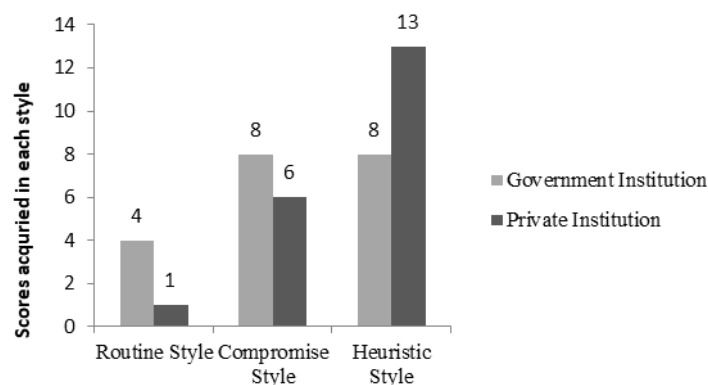
From the table – 1 it has found that out of 40 administrators of higher secondary schools, 4 administrators were following Routine Decision Making Style, 14 were following Compromise Decision Making Style and 22 were following heuristic Decision Making Style. The percentages of each category were 10%, 35% and 55% respectively. The findings revealed that "Routine decision - Making Style" is the least preferred style among the administrators of higher secondary schools. The findings further revealed that the maximum number of higher secondary school administrators of Lakhimpur district preferred Heuristic Style of Decision Making.

### Decision - making style of the administrators of higher secondary schools with reference to the type of institution

The scores acquired by both the government and private higher secondary school administrators on the "Decision Making Style Scale" were tabulated below

<b>Table 2:</b> Total number of different Decision - Making Styles being followed by Private and Government Institution			
SL. No.	Decision - Making style	Government Institution	Private Institution
1	Routine	4	1

	Decision - Making Style		
2	Compromise Decision - Making Style	8	6
3	Heuristic Decision - Making style	8	13



**Figure 2 –** Decision - making style of the educational administrators of higher secondary schools.

From table – 2 its has found that out of 20 administrators of government higher secondary schools 4 administrators were following Routine Decision Making Style, 8 were following Compromise Decision Making Style and 8 were following heuristic Decision - Making Style. On the other hand, out of 20 administrators of private higher secondary schools, 1 administrator was following routine Decision - Making style, 6 were following Compromise Decision Making Style and 13 were following Heuristic Decision - Making style. The findings of the study revealed that in the government institution the ratio of administrators' decision - making style between Compromise and Heuristic was the same but in the private institution the ratio varies. In private institution, the most preferred decision - making style among the administrators was Heuristic Decision Making Style.

## Suggestion

- Before selecting educational administrators an aptitude test should be conducted to check the potentialities of the administrators.
- Some in-service program on leadership capability should be organized for the administrators for effective leadership.
- The credentials, skills, and competencies of the administrators should be checked properly before selection.
- More studies should be conducted in every level of education to see the decision - making style of the administrators or principals.
- Some online courses on skills of decision making and process of making a good decision should be developed for headmasters, principals and administrators.

### Recommendations of the study

- i. The sample size of the study was very limited so further studies can be conducted with more samples.
- ii. The study has conducted with a limited number of the variable so, more variables can be included in further studies like the impact of organizational climate and job satisfaction in decision making.
- iii. Further studies can be conducted on decision - making styles of the principals with reference to their gender and year of experience.

### Conclusion

Administrators are considered as a higher authority of an organization. In the higher secondary stage of education principal is the administrative head. Regarding every aspect of the institution, the administrator will make a decision so, from that context it can be considered as their prime job. Making decisions can be considered as an administrator's routine activity. The improvement of the institution is largely dependent on an administrator's decision - making style. So, decision making plays an important role in an administrator's professional life.

Based on the results the study can be concluded by saying that the heuristic style is the highest preferred style of decision making among the educational administrators of the higher secondary school of Lakhimpur district. Heuristic style of decision making gives the administrators an opportunity to their ideas, thoughts and intuition. The results further revealed that compromise style is the second preferred style and there are very few administrators who rely on the routine style of decision making.

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