



## LEADERSHIP APPROACHES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

This paper examined how leadership styles impact the strategic decision-making in school management through policy implementation, resource distribution, conflict management and innovation. The research design adopted was descriptive and correlational, and the data were gathered using 150 respondents (school administrators and teachers) through a structured questionnaire that was based on Leadership Style Inventory (LSI) and a Decision-Making Scale (DMS). Analysis of variance (ANOVA), descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation were used to examine the data. Compared to autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, results showed that transformational and democratic leadership styles significantly influenced the efficacy of decision-making, resulting in cooperation, innovation, and participatory governance. Results from statistical analysis show that there is a high positive correlation between leadership style and the efficacy of decision making ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and that there are significant variations across the leadership styles ( $F = 9.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings highlight the value of visionary and participatory leadership practices in improving decision-making and paving the way for schools to achieve sustainable growth.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Strategic Decision-Making, School Management, Transformational Leadership



## **1.INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a crucial aspect in achieving success and sustainability of the educational institutions. Schools are now forced to work in a climate of fast social change, policy reforms, changes in technology and the mounting expectations of accountability. The fact is that in these dynamic environments, the capacity of school leaders to make good strategic decisions will not only influence the performance of the institutions but also the level of teacher and student satisfaction and achievement. Leadership hence does not involve authority or management alone, it includes vision, flexibility and the ability to influence people to share a common goal with others. Good leadership would lead to successful governance in today's educational institutions, and this may be better understood by studying the connection between leadership style and strategic decision-making.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Leadership is the pillar of proper school management, as it is important in determining the vision of an educational institution as well as the mission and the culture of the school. Leadership quality directly relates to the capacity of the schools in terms of adapting to the policy changes, integration of technology and the expectations of the stakeholders. In current educational life, which is highly dynamic, the leaders should not only be able to run the administration but also make sure that the decision-making techniques do not harm the processes of innovation, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.

School leadership seems to be based on strategic decision making as it defines the path of institutional development and performance. The approach used by the leader can have a profound influence on the work of the school as a whole, and it could be related to introducing new syllabi, the financial and human resources, or the internal disagreements. The possibility of informed and participatory decision-making will determine the degree to which schools would become academically excellent and stable in terms of organization.



## **1.2 Leadership Approaches in School Management**

Learning leadership approaches offer different visions on decision making in institutions.

- Transformational leadership encourages teachers and pupils to strive towards a common vision, which allows creativity, cooperation and inspiration.
- Transactional leadership is more focused on structure, reward schemes and accountability, which hold to the achievement of goals in the organization efficiently.
- Democratic leadership promotes involvement and group solutions, which increase transparency and employee involvement.
- The autocratic leadership can be effective in a situation that requires an immediate solution but it leads to centralization of authority and restricts communication and may lead to loss of morale.
- Laissez-faire leadership- autonomy of the subordinates but can create poor clarity of expectations and no organizational control.

Applying the concept of leadership style in the area of school management, choices are made about the implementation of policies, resources distribution, conflict resolution, and promotion of innovations. Knowing the impact of these leadership strategies on strategic decisions aids leaders of schools to perfect their management policies and trends to enhance their institutional performance.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

In order to fulfill the goal of this study and present a clear guide to be followed during the investigation, certain objectives have been stated. These will be the aims to examine the connection between leadership styles and strategic decision making in school management.

- To identify the predominant leadership styles practiced by school administrators and their impact on school management practices.

- To examine how different leadership styles influence strategic decision-making in areas such as policy implementation, resource allocation, conflict resolution, and innovation.
- To suggest effective leadership strategies that enhance decision-making and promote sustainable school development.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITREATURE

**Campos-García and Zúñiga-Vicente (2022)** examined the role of the demographic profiles of school principals in strategic decision making at secondary schools. In their research, they found that the age, professional experience and education levels were important in leadership behavior and quality of decisions. Principals who were of greater experience and educational attainment level were in a position to be position policies more closely with the institute goals and hence increase the effectiveness of the schools in general.

**Fadhilah et al. (2024)** centered on leadership change as a tool of enhancing teacher performance by making strategic decisions. They discovered that transformational leadership practices, especially those related to shared vision, motivation and teacher engagement increased individual and institutional performance. The conclusion of the study was that the school, which was under the leadership of transformational leaders, had better cooperation and was more flexible towards changes.

**Ibrahim and Daniel (2019)** investigated what leadership could achieve to organization performance and underlined that style of leadership had the direct impact on productivity, quality of decision making, and attainment of goals. According to their study, democratic and transformational leaders created an environment where people participated in decision making leading to a better communication and accountability levels contrary to autocratic leaders where innovativeness and better morale was limited.

**Ingersoll, Sirinides, and Dougherty (2018)** investigated the issue of teacher get involved in the decision-making process and its association with the performance in the school. They claimed that the general school performance improved greatly whenever the teachers participated in the



formulation of policies, curriculum planning, and school governing. The paper highlighted the fact that distributed or shared models of leadership empowered teachers, but also enhanced shared, collaborative decisions and professional accountability in schools.

**KRASNIQI and Hajdari (2024)** concerned different leadership styles and their role in decision-making efficiency in different organizations. Their results showed that leadership approach was very critical to speed, accuracy and acceptance of decisions in institutions. Transformational and democratic leaders were observed to make better and inclusive decisions as compared to autocratic leaders who were prone to focus more on exercising control rather than collaboration contributing to low decision acceptance and employee dissatisfaction.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Reliable and valid results may be provided by using a well-designed research approach. This study used a methodical approach to design in order to find out how various leadership styles influence school management's ability to make long-term strategic decisions. We employed all of the available methods to ensure that the data was collected correctly, evaluated correctly, and that we could make objective conclusions on the study's aims. Here we lay out the framework for the study, including the demographic and sample plan, data gathering instruments, and statistical methodologies that will be utilized for analyzing the results.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive and correlational research strategy to look at how different leadership styles relate to school management's strategic decision-making. The descriptive part aimed to provide a picture of the state of school administration leadership today, while the correlational part sought to determine the nature and strength of the connection between different types of leadership and effective decision-making. Researchers believed this strategy was appropriate as it allowed them to capture current circumstances and conduct correlations without influencing any of the variables.



### 3.2 Population and Sample

Leadership styles and their impact on school administrators' ability to make long-term plans were the subjects of this descriptive and correlational study. While the descriptive part detailed the most recent tendencies in school administrators' leadership styles, the correlational part determined the nature and strength of the connection between different leadership styles and effective decision-making. We thought this concept worked well as it let us record the current state of affairs and do correlations without letting us influence any of the variables.

### 3.3 Data Collection Tool

Data collection was done based on an organized questionnaire that was to analyze the style of leadership and effectiveness of strategic decisions made. The instrument was separated into two major parts:

- The Leadership Style Inventory (LSI) which tested behaviors of leaders in five categories including transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire.
- The Decision-Making Scale (DMS) was used to test the performance of decision-making regarding the main aspects of its activity, including policy implementation, allocation of resources, conflict resolution, and innovation.
- A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), was used to score each question. Expert editing of the questionnaire and a pilot study to ensure its reliability yielded an instrument with an exceptional internal consistency score (Cronbach's alpha) of above 0.80, confirming the questionnaire's quality.

### 3.4 Hypotheses

The following theories were created to guide the investigation and determine the connection between the various leadership styles and the process of establishing long-term plans:

- **H<sub>01</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** In the realm of school administration, there is no correlation between leadership philosophies and methods of formulating long-term plans.



- **H<sub>11</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Leadership styles and the ability to make long-term decisions in educational administration are highly related.

Statistical methods, such as Pearson correlation and ANOVA, were used to evaluate the hypotheses and find out if there is a significant relationship between leadership style and school decision-making processes.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The data that were found were categorized and examined using appropriate quantitative statistical techniques. Using the descriptive statistics technique, we calculated the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution to describe the demographic data and leadership style preferences. The direction and strength of the association between leadership styles and decision-making efficacy were determined using the Pearson correlation coefficient. In addition, the significant differences in decision-making outcomes were determined using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the other leadership styles. A specific level of thinking was used for the interpretation ( $p < 0.05$ ) in order to obtain the correct response.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

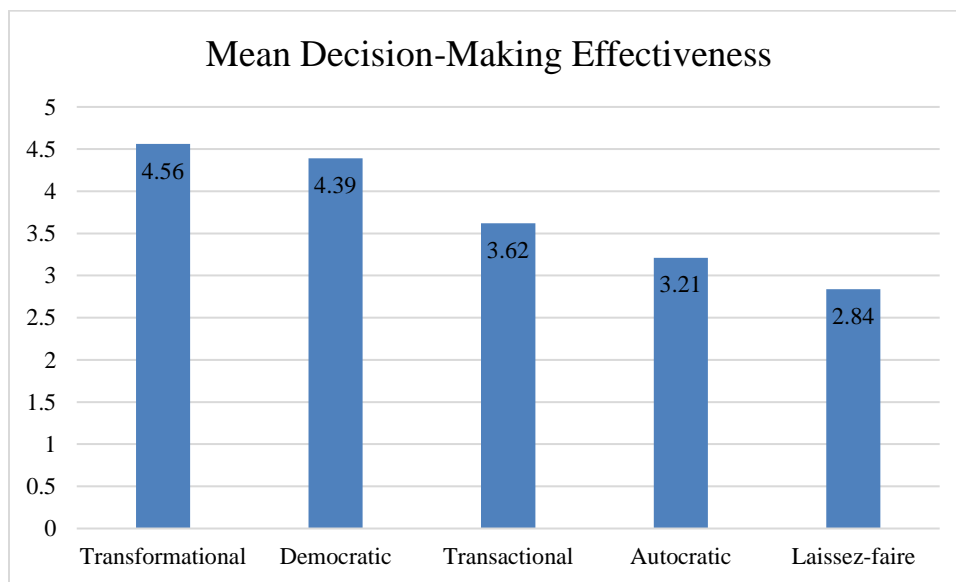
In this section, you will discover the results of the statistical analysis that will be conducted in order to ascertain the connection between the different leadership styles and how they influence the strategic decision-making process inside school administration. Using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and analysis of variance, we studied data from 150 respondents, including public and private school administrators and instructors. What follows is a discussion of the results.

### 4.1 The Role of Leadership Styles in Efficient Decision-Making

In Table 1, we can see how different leadership styles fare in four areas of strategic decision-making: supporting innovation, resolving conflicts, allocating resources, and implementing policies.

**Table 1:** Mean Scores and Decision-Making Effectiveness across Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Mean Decision-Making Effectiveness	Policy Implementation	Resource Allocation	Conflict Resolution	Innovation Support
Transformational	4.56	High	High	High	Very High
Democratic	4.39	High	Moderate-High	High	High
Transactional	3.62	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Autocratic	3.21	High (Directive)	Moderate	Low	Low
Laissez-faire	2.84	Low	Low	Low	Very Low



**Figure 1:** Graphical Representation of Mean Scores and Decision-Making Effectiveness across Leadership Styles

The descriptive findings show that transformational leadership registered the highest mean in the general (4.56) and then democratic leadership (4.39) and this shows that they have great impact in effective strategic decision-making. These leaders promote cooperation, creativity and vision on the part of school employees. On the other hand, the lowest performance figures were seen in autocratic (3.21) and laissez-faire styles, which can be interpreted as indicators of the fact that excessively directive or passive leadership can act as an obstacle to successful school management and innovations. The transactional style (3.62) performed at an average level and was effective in established and task-oriented settings, as well as inelastic in the assistance of creativity and involvement.

#### 4.2 Evaluation of the Link Between Leadership Approach and Decision-Making Process

To determine the strength and direction of the association between leadership style and decision making efficacy, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated.

**Table 2:** Correlation between Leadership Style and Decision-Making Effectiveness

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)	Interpretation
Leadership Style × Decision-Making Effectiveness	0.68	0.01	Strong Positive Correlation

The value of the correlation ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p$  less than 0.01) shows that there is a high positive relationship between leadership style and decision-making effectiveness in school management. This implies that the more the style of leadership is becoming participative and transformational, the more they can be effective, inclusive, and innovative in the decision-making processes. The large value of  $p$  supports the fact that the relationship is statistically significant with the level of 0.01.

### 4.3 ANOVA Test: Differences among Leadership Styles

In an attempt to elaborate on whether statistically significant differences existed in decision-making effectiveness across the different leadership styles, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) train of test was executed.

**Table 3:** ANOVA Results for Leadership Styles and Strategic Decision-Making

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Between Groups	22.54	4	5.64	9.72	0.01	Significant
Within Groups	83.72	145	0.58			
Total	106.26	149				

The statistical significance of the difference between the leadership styles in relation to the efficacy of strategic decision-making is indicated by the F-value (9.72) with a p-value of 0.01. The way decisions are made in schools and how they affect important administrative and pedagogical performances are greatly influenced by leadership style, as this can be confirmed. This proves that leadership style significantly affects strategic decision making in school administration, and it also rejects the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) in favor of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

### 4.4 Discussion of Findings

The results are categorical that leadership styles affect the way strategic decisions are implemented and how they are made in educational institutions. Transformational and democratic leaders proved to be the most successful ones who in turn focus on shared vision, teamwork and empowerment which are all important in learning settings where motivation and innovation are vital. The styles encourage active involvement in decision making and boosts teacher morale and creates an atmosphere that allows innovation by solving problems creatively.



Autocratic leadership, on the contrary, whilst the best in a directive context, restricts participatory dialogue, as well as innovation, resulting in lack of flexibility in situations that are complex or dynamic in school. The least effective leadership style was the Laissez-faire leadership which implies ambiguity and lack of accountability among employees.

The high ANOVA results and significant connection go back to the idea that leadership behaviors directly affect the efficacy of the strategic decision-making process in policy-making, conflict resolution, and resource allocation. Consistent with previous research on the subject, these findings provide more evidence that high-quality leadership is crucial for determining an organization's success and making sound decisions (Campos-Garcia and Zuniga-Vicente, 2022; Fadhilah et al., 2024; Ingersoll et al., 2018).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The study's findings show that leadership quality has a significant impact on school administration's ability to make strategic decisions. Based on the results, leadership styles that are more democratic and transformative tend to make better decisions that involve more people and foster more innovation, whereas those that are more authoritarian and laissez-faire tend to inhibit collaboration and adaptability. The results of the statistical tests demonstrated a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between leadership style and the efficacy of the decision-making process, with significant variations between leadership styles ( $F = 9.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

In sum, the results indicate that participative and visionary leadership leads to good performance in policy implementation, allocation of resources, and innovation. Such leadership quality developed among the school administrators can facilitate the efficiency of decision making and facilitate growing in institutions sustainably.

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