IDENTIFICATION OF THE DECISION MAKING STYLE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author aims to investigate, by qualitative techniques based on the administration of structured questionnaires, the efficiency of the working groups in the public and private organizational sectors. The influence of the group over the individual is so great in time that it generates a sui generis group reality that transcends individuals (i.e. the amount of the parts is not equal to the whole). For this reason, knowing the groups based on their efficiency is important because the efficiency of the individuals of a group does not necessarily ensue the efficiency of said group as a whole. Our qualitative research is comprised of two stages. During the first stage, within a pilot research, through a self-administered structured questionnaire, starting from the traditional group processes also encountered during the working groups, we asked 25 managers from both organizational environments (public and private) and at all authority levels (low-middle-top) to identify as many aspects from the professional life of the groups (processes, phenomena, activities) which have a direct impact on the efficiency of the working group.
During the second stage of the research, we retained 12 aspects which the respondents identified as having a large impact on group efficiency and which were selected based on frequency. Based on them we drew up another 12-statement questionnaire which were administered to a number of 120 respondents for the purpose of our research. The conclusion is that the respondents in the private sector identify a higher level of efficiency in their working groups than those from the public sector, based on the scores given to those 12 assertions in the questionnaire.

KEYWORDS: *decision, decision maker, decision-making process, decision-making style, organisation.*

1. INTRODUCTION: IMPORTANCE OF DECISION IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT. DECISION-MAKING STYLE

The decision is so important in the managerial act that it is a theme on the same level as the managerial functions. The premise I started with in my analysis was that the modern man had, among other things, the skills to make decisions, because day by day he, in order to solve life situations, he had to make decisions. These are very important because we can better manage uncertainty by seeking solutions, alternatives to solving dilemma situations. For Gummer (1998), the fact that we learn to work with alternatives is essential for our further training in the organizational environment, which is nothing more than an extension of the social. Audley (1967) said that because of these abilities, in the decision-making process, as in the case of management, "people already have in mind what needs to be done", and the gathering of the information needed to make the decision is done to justify what has already been decided.

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Regarding the importance of the decision in the organization, Mintzberg (1973) showed that the decision roles are "probably the most important part of the manager's work - the part that justifies his authority and access to information."

The majority of specialists in the field (Certo, 2002; Simon, 2004; Drucker, 1973; Zlate, 2004; Pruna, 2012) agreed on the importance of the decision.

What is the decision?

The decision is a dynamic, rational process to solve a problem by choosing a more possible solution to achieve the planned objectives (Pruna, 2012). From this point of view, we understand that the decision is not the same with the ruling as most people think. It is a choice, which means at least two alternative solutions to choose from. That is why learning to work with alternatives is important to be an effective decision maker. In order to highlight the context and the subjectivity, Simon (2004) is right to say that any decision is rather a matter of compromise because the choice made will not cause a complete achievement of the objectives but it is the best choice in the given circumstances. Subsequently, the decision may be supplemented by other decisions.

The diversity of situations requiring decisions, even if very large, does not invalidate this logic. An attempt to synthesize them shows that decisions can be made (Pruna, 2012):

- when new ideas and methods appear to improve the socio-professional activity (change decisions required by the dynamics of the organization);
- when malfunctions, unpleasant surprises, conflicts occur (decisions to settle the situation);
- when resources are distributed among the members of the team, when rewards or punishments are granted (allocation decisions).

On any of these levels, the decisions to be taken will be completed in the future, which makes us think of a complex of decisions or a certain context. This should be true in both organizational, private and public sectors.

In order to outline a general picture of what competences mean in the decision area, Mintzberg (2004) structures these competences in five areas:

- schedule competencies refer to decisions related to determining important issues, setting priorities, setting the agenda, handling situations, choosing the right moment,
- management competencies, refer to decisions related to resource allocation, delegation, authorization, systematization, setting of objectives, evaluation of the activity carried out,
- competencies in creation, refer to planning, conception and imagination decisions, mobilization competencies, refer to decisions on urgent problem solving, project management.

Requirements of the decision quality

A decision must meet certain requirements (Drucker, 1973; Certo, 2002; Maccrimmon & Wehrung, 1986; Pruna, 2012) to be considered an effective decision. It has to be first of all a quality decision, that is, to solve the problem best in the context given. The quality of a decision is not a requirement in itself, it is either the performance standard, or simply the satisfaction threshold, developed by the organization. Each organization proposes a level of performance that can not be overcome. Quality is measured against this threshold.

Secondly, a decision must reach the consensus, it must be accepted as qualitative by the vast majority of those who implement it. Consensus is extremely important when the decision taken requires a great effort to implement it and involves material and financial expenses, because, in this case, any failure will be very difficult to overcome by the members of the team.

The third requirement for decision is to take the risk. Very few decisions are taken under absolute certainty, most have incorporated into them a certain risk coefficient that the decision-maker must own. Owing the risk is one of the most important aspects of the practical decision-making process.

What is the decision style?

Decision-making style refers to the practical concrete manner in which the manager takes the decisions necessary to solve the problems that come up during the daily work. The personality and

the behavior of the manager, the relationship with the direct subordinates, the involvement of the people in the decision, the working climate, the consensus assurance, the decision skills and competencies form together the decision style. Is it important to know the decision styles? Can they be trained? Is there what could be called an ideal type of decision style in the Weberian sense? These are important questions in management practice.

Certainly, decision-making style is trained and not acquired at birth. This means that managers can form skills to practice a particular decision-making style. As there is no ideal type of decision-making style, that is, a style that once acquired, one can solve any problem, it means that each style has advantages and disadvantages. Which style should be adopted? What role does the concrete situation play in the context? These are questions that have been answered with theorizing the conjuncture or situation decision-making style that conditions the exercise of a certain style of decision-making.

2. THE VROOM/YETTOU MODEL AND THE DECISON-MAKING STYLE

If we take into account the importance of the decision in the organizational managerial act, the correctness of decision making in the process of work is an important condition for the efficiency of the activity. As the manager is the most important authority in decision-making, it results that the style in which the manager makes the decision is very important in the subsequent analysis of the quality of the decision.

One of the most interesting models of decision-making, implicitly of identifying the decision-making style, developed by Vroom Yettou, is situational or conjunctural models. The basic hypothesis of the model is based on the idea that in order to make efficient decisions, it is necessary to analyze and understand the context in which they are taken. Based on this hypothesis, the model develops several decision-making types that theoretically can be taken by the manager. Synthetically, the 5 types of decisions the model promotes are:

Autocratic 1 (individualist style) - Focused on the authority and direct responsibility of the manager. It solves problems or makes decisions by using only the information at its disposal at that time. It is the most widespread type of decision-making in organizations, because decision-making is considered to be the appanage of the manager. The manager believes that it is his exclusive competence from this point of view he does not consult his direct subordinates, so he just makes a one-way decision. The more centralized and authoritarian the organizational system is, the more the tendency towards autocratic decision-making style 1 is highlighted;

Autocratic 2 - Focused on the authority and direct responsibility of the manager. Unlike the first style, the manager asks for additional information, where needed, from collaborators/subordinates. Unfortunately, their role is reduced only to providing such information, most often not knowing what it is, the manager building hypothetical situations to mask the real problem, interested only in solutions. This decision-making style requires a prior dialogue between the decision-maker and other members of the team, usually those who are appreciated by the manager. The decision, however, belongs exclusively to the manager, the entire responsibility is his. Even if some solutions were put forth by others, to the extent that they adopt them, the manager assumes their paternity.

Consultative 1 - Focused on sharing the authority and responsibility of the manager with the close collaborators, only in substantiating decisions. The manager analyzes the problem with individual collaborators/subordinates, retains their suggestions and suggestions. Discussions with the close collaborators are done individually. The final decision is taken by the manager, and this may reflect more or less their opinion. This type of decision is based on a real consultation with the close people, even if it is done individually. People know what the problem is and about the fact that it belongs to their structure. Thus, they present an informed point of view;

Consultative 2 - Focused on the division of authority and responsibility of the manager with close collaborators, only in substantiating decisions. The manager examines the problem with group

subordinates and retains their suggestions and suggestions. Then, he takes the decision himself. The decision taken may take into account the solutions developed by the subordinates. Collective consultation lines up this type of decision to participatory style, although the decision is actually made by the manager. This style of decision-making encourages direct group communication as well as finding solutions by collective negotiation. Due to the collective effort made, if the decision that the manager takes constantly does not reflect the positions of the participants, there is a boomerang effect in the sense that the participation will be gradually reduced.

Team (collective style) - Focused on the division of authority and responsibility of the manager with collaborators involved in the entire decision-making process. The manager studies the problem with the group subordinates. Together with them, he alternately evaluates all solutions outlined in the context. The manager is more a discussion moderator. He does not try to impose his point of view and accepts the solution that most of the group members support.

Which decision-making style should be chosen? Beyond the context in which work is done, the effectiveness of the decision taken relates to the two requirements necessary to substantiate the effective decision that I have mentioned at the beginning of the article - quality and consensus. Taking these into account, the authors of the model have developed a set of rules related to the two.

Quality rules are:

The rule of informing the manager - if it is an important decision and the manager does not have enough information to make a quality decision, he will not use the autocratic process 1. From the point of view of this rule, informing the manager is so important that when not done, the decision shall be suspended until it is completed. The decision-maker may use any decision other than the one excluding information.

Rule of Convergence of Objectives - if it is an important decision, and subordinates cannot properly analyze the objectives of the organization, the manager will not use the group procedure. This rule is based on two prerequisites: the existence of a convergence in terms of objectives to be achieved and discretionary access to information within the organization. Due to these two premises corroborated, the group procedure may not apply for some decisions - especially when subordinates do not have information because they do not have access to it - because it can be counterproductive.

The rule of dilemmas - if it is an important decision and the manager does not have enough information and the problem is confusing, the manager will apply the consultative procedure 2 or the decision making in group. There are many problems that have hidden, less noticeable or other causes. All sorts of dissatisfaction, non-fulfillment that is not made public, are underlying problems, sometimes serious for the collective. The rule calls for the radiography of the real causes that hide behind people or situations. The two processes are participatory, and their role is to discover these causes especially when problems are confused, with hidden causes.

The rules of consensus/unanimity are:

The rule of acceptance - if acceptance of the decision could raise problems, the manager will not use either of the two authoritarian processes. Many specialists agree that once a decision is accepted, then it will be easier to implement because people have already been convinced. We have to understand that there are decisions that some employees will lose, and others will win. We are talking about a rational acceptance that targets the majority rather than an individual acceptance.

The rule of conflict - if the subordinates show reserves towards the decision, the manager will use the consultative procedure 2 or in group. People's reserves will thus be more easily defeated and channeled to accept the situation.

The rule of honesty - if it is not a major decision, but there are acceptance issues, the group procedure will be used to increase the probability of acceptance. The more people participate in the search for solutions, the more they are expected to accept the decision, being somewhat part of it.

The rule of priority - if the issue of acceptance is the most important, and the subordinates understand the objectives of the organization, then the manager will use the group procedure. The use of the group procedure is beneficial as it increases the commitment and reminds people of the

values they have willingly adhered to and which must now be maintained or developed.
Besides the decision styles and quality and consensus rules, the model promotes a series of questions designed to help the decision maker to better understand the specific context in which the decision is made. The following questions were designed by the researchers to give the decision maker the opportunity to have an overview of the situation and the effects of the decision on people and the organization according to the answers he gives.

These questions are:
- Is there a quality requirement in the decision making, so a solution is more rational than another?
- Do we have sufficient information for a quality decision?
- Is the problem structured (well understood)?
- Is the acceptance of the decision by subordinates an important matter or not?
- If the manager is making the decision on his own, is there at least some certainty that it will be accepted by the subordinates?
- Are subordinates able to estimate the organization's objectives to be co-opted to solve the problem?
- Would the conflict between subordinates (if any) be reflected in the decision?

In conclusion, referring to the Vroom Yettou model we can say that:
- there is no what could be called the best decision-making style;
- each style presented in the model has strong points and weaknesses;
- choosing a particular style depends on the context in which the work is carried out;
- the logic of the model is the type: if ... then;
- in choosing a style we also take into account the rules and the questions promoted in the model, besides the context

The manager can take any of these 5 decisions. The option for one way or another is according to the conjuncture. From this point of view, there is no more effective or less efficient type, but types of decisions that can and cannot be taken in a particular situation. The model is indicative and does not guarantee strictly better decision making for the managers who use it. This does not mean that the appropriation of the model and of the theoretical approach underlying it will not be of any real use in your practical work. The philosophy of using the model is "if (...) then".

3. IDENTIFICATION OF DECIDATION-MAKING STYLE IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS BY THE VROOM/YETTOU MODEL. A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

3.1 Considerations regarding the research methodology
The qualitative research we have made in this study has started from the characteristics of the five decision-making styles promoted in the model. I have sought to analyze how managers use a certain decision-making style in the public and private organizational sectors. The research hypothesis started from the idea that there should be no different decision-making styles between the two sectors, taking into account the collective mentality and the system of general values that characterize both organizational sectors. It is to be expected that there will be some differences in the score for the most important decision style. I also sought to identify the first complementary decision style, the one that receives the second score in respondents' perception.

Last but not least, the scores should be tightened considering that these styles are contextual and can be used in turn depending on the situation.

As a research tool, he used a self-administered questionnaire with 15 statements, three for each decision-making style, the answers to these statements being from 1 to 10, where 1 is totally untrue and 10 totally true.

We handed this questionnaire to 100 public and 100 private employees. The respondents are subordinate employess, I was interested in identifying the manager's decision-making style from his direct subordinates.

Table 1. Questionnaire to identify the decision-making style

Searching new information when decisions need to be made is considered by your manager a waste of time.

The manager receives information from his subordinates to make a decision, even if, in most cases, he does not take it into account.

The manager consults individually with certain collaborators when making decisions.

The manager gathers the collaborators to make decisions even if he may not take them into account.

The manager prefers to discuss issues and make decisions with the whole team

The managers are the ones who are dealing exclusively with decision-making.

The manager asks for information about the problem using hypothetical scenarios so that subordinates do not realize that the problem is at the level of their team.

Some decisions taken by the managers reflect the opinions of the very close collaborators.

Analyzing group issues for making a decision provides subordinates the opportunity to speak up their points of view.

Even if the manager could have the final say, he respects the solution that is outlined by consensus

The manager always has the information needed to make the decision himself.

The manager the information to make decisions only from the close ones and not from those who know the problem well.

The boss, even if he consults with some collaborators to solve a problem and make a decision, may not take into account the solutions offered by them.

Subordinates are no longer interested in proposing solutions when they meet together if they see that the manager constantly does not take them into account.

The manager is rather a moderator and does not try to impose his own decision.

Source: the author

3.2 Findings of the research – identification of the decision-making style by the Vroom/Yettou model

The analysis and data processing lead us to some important aspects of our research. In relation to the dominant decision-making style, both samples indicated the same decision-making style, respectively the consultative 1, based on the division of responsibility in the substantiation of the decision and the fact that the manager analyzes the problem with certain collaborators/subordinates individually, retains their suggestions and proposals and the final decision is taken by the manager, and it may reflect more or less their opinion. For the public organization, the average score was 7, 4, the scores for the three questions were in order: 8 for the statement 3 of the questionnaire, 7,3 for the the statement 8 of the questionnaire and 7,1 for the the statement 13 of the questionnaire.

In the private sector, the general average overall score was 7.6, for each statement the situation was: 8.3 for the statement 3, 7.2 for the statement 8 and 7.5 for the statement 13. As a general conclusion, the consultative style is considered dominant for both samples, the statement that received the highest score was that the manager consulted individually with certain collaborators when making decisions.

With regard to the second style identified that I named complementary style, each organizational sector directed towards a certain style, not opting for a common style. Thus, the public sector opted for autocratic style 2, with a general average score of 6.9, 0.5 points lower than the first preferred

style. As the scores on the affirmations, at the statement 2, the score was 7.1, at the statement 7 it was 6.9 and at the statement 12 it was 6.8.

Respondents from the private sector chose a complementary decision-making style, consultative style 2, with a general average score of 7, by affirmations the situation is the following, at the statement 4, the score is 7.3, at the statement 9 the score is 7.1 and at the statement 14, the score is 6.8. The difference between dominant and complementary styles was 0.6 points.

The other decision styles received much lower scores compared to the 2, so the sample on the public sector, the autocratic style 1, the average general score was 4.2, for the consultative 2 the score was 3.4 and for the group style, the score was 1.9. For the private sector, the scores for the other styles were autocratic 1, the score was 3.9, for autocratic 2, the score was 4.0 and for the group style, the score was 2.3.

We notice the big difference between the first two styles chosen and the other 3, which leads us to the idea that the decision-making style is not necessarily contextual and polarized around the dominant and the complementary styles. A greater humour to dialogue and consultation within the private sector as compared to the public sector. Overall, both organizational sectors have communication problems, cooperation and common decision-making if we analyze the very small scores, the smallest ones obtained by the group style, reported in both organizational sectors.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Decision-making competences remain some of the most important competences in the management act. The decision remains, despite many statements, an attitude rather than just an aptitude. It requires more than a number of skills. It requires an integrating mechanism based on vision and accountability, a mechanism with an obvious psychological substrate that allows the manager to use the energies of others, collaborators or subordinates to make quality decisions.

The identification of the decision-making style by the Vroom/Yettou model shows that managers do not make context, situation-based decisions and already have in mind, in terms of attitude, the predisposition to a dominant style followed closely by a complementary one. The entire organizational diversity is not treated contextually, but by his action, the manager forces this diversity in certain decision-making patterns.

It is important, however, to note that both organizational sectors opt for the consultative style1, a style based on communication, discussions, dissemination of information, focusing on the real problems. On the other hand, the manager does not always take into account the solutions offered by others, his point of view is often the most important. Last but not least, the small score of group style shows that both sectors use preponderantly the authority and responsibility of the manager. The Vroom/Yettou model remains an interesting tool for building decision-making skills, reinforcing the idea that a decision-making style can be trained, and what is most important, argues that we cannot speak of a unique, panacea decision-making style that can be used in any situation.

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