
DECISION-MAKING AND MANPOWER PLANNING PROCESSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Officers in public authorities regularly make administrative decisions as part of delivering services to the public. Sometimes, the decision-maker is required to exercise some discretion when making a decision. Here, the decision-maker has a choice about whether to act or not to act; to approve or not to approve, or to approve with conditions. The role of a decision-maker is to make a judgment, taking into account all relevant information. On the other hand, Manpower planning (human capital development) involves investments in education, training, health and other social services that will boost the capacity of labour. It also refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for the economic growth and political development of a country (Okojie, 1995:44). This study therefore draws insights into the Meaning, Characteristics, Rationale, Assumptions, Types, Bases, Hindrances and Essentials of Decision-making. It also focuses on its Objectives and Importance as well as Manpower Planning Process. This paper is very essential to managers owing to the fact that it reveals ways of attaining national development and industrialization through decision-making and manpower planning.

Key words: Decision-Making, Manpower Planning, Industrialization and National Development.

Abstract:

Officers in public authorities regularly make administrative decisions as part of delivering services to the public. Sometimes the decision-maker is required to exercise some discretion when making a decision. Here, the decision-maker has a choice about whether to act or not to act, to approve or not approve, or to approve with conditions. The role of a decision-maker is to make a judgement taking into account all relevant information. On the other hand, Manpower planning/human capital development involves investments in education, training, health and other social services that will boost the capacity of labour. It also refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for the economic growth and political development of a country (Okojie, 1995:44). This study therefore draws insights into; the Meaning, Characteristics, Rationale, Assumptions, Types, Bases, Hindrances and Essentials of Decision-making. It also focused on; Objectives, Importance, Rationale and Manpower Planning Process. This paper is essential to managers owing to the fact that it reveals ways of attaining national development and industrialization through decision making and manpower planning.

Introduction:

Decision making and manpower planning are essential phenomena for organizational success and national development. Any organization or nation that wants to grow its economic output must pay, not lip service but essential respect to the practice of decision-making and manpower planning. Making effective decisions as a manager is a very significant challenge in a fast-moving world. Increasingly, managers are expected to act under conditions of uncertainty or limited information which have a considerable impact at every stage of the decision-making process.

As a manager, you will need to apply your skills to select the most appropriate approach for the context you are operating within and the kind of decision you need to make. Usually, this will involve striking a balance between the two extremes outlined above. Good decision-making skills will enable you to understand what information you will require and how best to use it to inform your decisions as well as help you to avoid unhelpful or biased assumptions, and recognise the degrees of uncertainty and risk involved and whether these are acceptable in the circumstances.

“Manpower/Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy, will be unable to develop anything else.” Therefore, “human resources/human capital”, often used interchangeably with “manpower” refers to the “totality of the energies, skills, knowledge and experience available in a country” (Diejomaoh, 1978:34). “It is managerial, scientific, engineering, technical, craftsmen and other skills which are employed in creating, designing, developing organizations, managing and operating productive and service enterprises and economic institutions” (Yesufu, 1962).

The concept of Manpower also refers to the abilities and skills of the human resources of a country, while manpower planning refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for the economic growth and political development of a country (Okojie, 1995:44). Manpower planning according to Okojie, “Is thus associated with investments in man and his development as a creative and productive person.” The totality of effort and costs involved in this considerable improvement of the productive capacity of the people constitutes investments in human resources, also referred to as manpower development or human resources development or human capital formation.

Human resources are all-embracing, that is, it is inclusive of persons who work now, or are likely to be productively employed sooner or later. In other words, manpower planning has almost the entire population as its target. Therefore, manpower planning is a continuum, a continuing process from childhood to old age, and a must for any society or enterprise that wishes to survive under the complex challenges of a dynamic world. Yesufu (2000), in agreement with this view, says, “the essence of manpower planning becomes one of ensuring that the workforce is continuously adapted for, and upgraded to meet, the new challenges of its total environment.” This is because the economy is a dynamic entity which is constantly changing in response to various stimuli such as introduction and discoveries of new products or techniques of production. A special human capacity can be acquired and developed in

different ways, namely education, training, health promotion as well as investment in all social services that influence man's productive capacities, including telecommunications, transport and housing. The role of manpower in economic growth cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the need for appropriate manpower development and accumulation is a prerequisite for modern economic growth in both developed and developing countries. It has been recognized that the development of manpower is also an essential pre-condition for a country's economic, political and socio-cultural transformation. Therefore, manpower is considered as the most valuable asset for a country's socio-economic and political transformation and this needs to be mobilized, developed and empowered to participate fully in all socio-economic activities.

DECISION-MAKING:

Decision-making is a common everyday phenomenon. Decision-making is the basis of all organisations be they Public or Private. It is the essence of management. Of all the problems in management, the problem of decision-making is the most difficult. In Public Administration, decision-making is not as easy as it is in business and we cannot keep things pending indefinitely. In Public Administration, we need right decisions. Decision-making in Public Administration is not free from outside influences. All types of pressures, direct and indirect, exert themselves and a decision may have to be taken, much to the displeasure and disapproval of the decision-maker. While business administration is much freer from pressures. Effective management of public or private organisations believes in making right and responsible decisions.

Meaning and Definition: Decision-making is defined as the selection of a course of action from amongst alternatives, and it covers matters relating to planning, organising, directing, staffing and controlling. A decision is an act of choice wherein an executive form a conclusion about what must be done in a given situation.

Webster's dictionary defines the term 'Decision-making' as "the act of determining, in one's mind, upon an opinion or course of action." According to Terry (2013), it is "the selection of one behaviour alternative from two or more possible alternatives." In the words of Seckler-Hudson (2016), "Decision-making in government is a plural activity. One individual may pronounce the decision but another may contribute to the process of reaching the decision. It is part of the political system." According to Ishwar Dayal (2015), "Decision making is the commitment of the decision-maker to act, thereby committing the personnel, material and financial resources of the organisation to the action objectives." Decision-making includes all the considerations that go into identifying a problem, reaching a conclusion and then taking action.

Characteristics:

1. Decisions are usually made to achieve some purpose or goal.
2. No decision stands alone. They are all linked together in a sequential chain.
3. It occurs over a period of time so that concurrent events influence the outcome.

Rational Decision-Making Process: It involves several steps leading towards optional solutions. The steps are:

- (a) To diagnose a problem.
- (b) To analyse the internal (time, money, management talent, workers' skills and other resources) and external (economic climate, interest rates, capital markets, politics and social changes and environmental) factors.

- (c) To state the problems correctly.
- (d) To develop alternatives which indicate the various courses of action that may achieve the objective.
- (e) To evaluate alternatives. The advantages and disadvantages of each alternative are taken into consideration. Usually, alternatives are evaluated to satisfy criteria such as sufficiency and feasibility.
- (f) To select the best alternatives that will maximise the results in terms of existing objectives.

Basis of Decision-making: The means of arriving at a decision may be rational, deliberate, emotional, impulsive or habitual. Intuition, facts, experience and authority are among the most common bases used in arriving at a decision. Seckler-Hudson (2016) enumerates twelve factors which must be considered in decision-making – legal limitations, the budget, facts, history, internal morale, the future as anticipated, role of superiors, Pressure groups, staff, nature of programme and subordinates.

Assumptions of Rational Decision-making:

1. That there is no conflict over the goal.
2. That all the relevant criteria can be identified and all viable alternatives can be listed. Further, that all possible consequences for each alternative are known.
3. That alternatives can be assigned numerical values and ranked in a preferential order.
4. That the alternative that would maximise satisfaction would be selected.

There Are 7 Types of Decision Making. Which One is Best for You?

It is easy to complain about the decision process in your company, but finding the right one is elusive. Let us take a look at the alternatives.

1. Decide and announce.

One method is to review options in terms of objectives, priorities, timescale, and then autocratically decide on an action and inform the team of the decision. This approach will likely demotivate experienced teams, but may be required when time is of the essence (I once worked for a start-up CEO who used this approach, even when time was not an issue. The result was a team that felt totally unappreciated, and productivity declined to the point that our start-up was no longer competitive).

2. Decide and then communicate to others.

Another option is to make the decision, and then explain to the team, the company and customers the reasons for that decision and the positive benefits accruing from it. In this scenario, the decision becomes part of the team's learning process, and the team's confidence in you will increase rather than decrease.

3. Present the decision and invite comments.

Presenting the decision along with the background, and inviting team members to ask questions and discuss the rationale, is another way to go. This more participatory and engaging approach enables the team to appreciate the issues and implications at stake, and it improves satisfaction.

4. Suggest a decision and invite discussion.

You can also discuss and review a provisional decision on the basis that you will evaluate your team's views before making a final decision. Thus, team members have real influence over the final decision, and can recognize that their contribution has been appreciated.

5. Present the situation for input and joint decision.

An even more trusting process is to present the options to the team. Encourage and expect team members to offer ideas and additional options, and discuss implications of various choices. Asking team members to be highly involved and influential is always motivating for them.

6. Explain the situation and ask the team to decide.

It is also valid to delegate responsibility for the decision to the team, perhaps with stated limits. In this approach, you may or may not choose to be a part of the team that decides. This process requires a mature team that can handle accepting major responsibility.

7. Ask the team to define the problem and make the decision.

With this approach, team members identify and analyze the situation, develop resolution options, and then decide on a preferred course of action. You agree to support the decision and manage implementation. This puts the team at the strategic decision-making level.

Other Types of Decisions: According to Asiegbu (2014:100) the various types of decisions in an organisation are:

- (a) *Organisational and personal decisions:* Decisions taken by an executive which affect organisational functioning directly are organisational decisions. Personal decisions are decisions taken by the executive which affect his personal life.
- (b) *Policy and operative decisions:* Policy decisions are very important and have a long-term impact and are taken by top management to determine the basic policies. Operative decisions relate to the day to day operations that are handled by the lower levels of management.
- (c) *Individual and group decisions:* Individual decisions are taken by an individual alone and group decisions are taken by a group of people together.
- (d) *Routine and strategic decisions:* Routine decisions refer to decisions taken in relation to the day to day workings of the organisation. Being repetitive in nature, routine decisions are generally taken at the lower levels of the organisation. Strategic decisions affect organisational structures, objectives, facilities and finance, and are taken at the higher levels of management.

Hindrances/What Can Prevent Effective Decision-Making?

There are a number of problems that can prevent effective decision-making. These include:

1. Not Enough Information:

If you do not have enough information, it may appear that you have no basis for making a decision. Take some time to gather the necessary data to inform your decision, even if the timescale is very short. If necessary, prioritize your information-gathering by identifying which information will be most important to you.

2. Too Much Information:

The opposite of the first problem, but one that is often seen surprisingly: having so much conflicting information that it is impossible to see 'the wood for the trees'. This is sometimes called *analysis paralysis*, and is also used as a tactic to delay organizational decision-making,

with those involved always demanding more information before they can decide. This problem can often be resolved by getting everyone together to decide what information is really important and why, and by setting a clear timescale for decision-making, including an information-gathering stage.

3. Too Many People:

Making decisions by committees is difficult. Everyone has their own views, and their own values. Also, while it is important to know what these views are, and why and how they are important, it may be essential for one person to take responsibility for making a decision. Sometimes, any decision is better than none.

4. Vested Interests:

Decision-making processes based on vested interests. These vested interests are often not overtly expressed, but may constitute blockage. Because they are not overtly expressed, it is hard to identify them clearly, and therefore, address them, but it may sometimes be possible to do so by exploring them using someone outside the process, but in a similar position. It can also help to explore the rationale/intuitive aspects with all stakeholders, usually with an external facilitator to support the process.

5. Emotional Attachments:

People often prefer to maintain the status quo. Decisions tend to involve the prospect of change, which many people find difficult. But also remember that *deciding not to decide* is also a decision.

6. No Emotional Attachment:

Sometimes it is difficult to make a decision because you just do not care one way or the other. In this case, a structured decision-making process can often help by identifying some very real pros and cons of particular actions that, perhaps, you had not thought about before.

Many of these issues can be overcome by using a structured decision-making process. This will help to:

- Reduce more complicated decisions to simpler steps;
- See how each decision is arrived at; and
- Plan decision-making to meet deadlines.

Other Hindrances to sound Decision-making: Some of the hindrances are:

- (a) Involvement of routine activities.
- (b) The difficulty of timely selection of the problem for solution.
- (c) What is right decision? (The right decision must be in accord with the general interest, the constitutional spirit, and the moral principle).
- (d) Bias (It means a swaying influence or undue leaning to one side, and it may take the form of prejudice in the negative sense and predilection in the positive sense. Bias may be conscious or unconscious; personal or institutional. In Public Administration, bias means whether a given decision has been taken in accordance with the departmental rules, norms and traditions).

Essentials of Decision-making: Some important requirements for effective decision-making are:

- (a) Management Information System.
- (b) Knowledge of management techniques (programme evaluation and review techniques, Critical path method, Cost-Benefit and Cost-Effectiveness, Operation research, etc.).
- (c) Familiarity with the aspirations of the clients.
- (d) Knowledge of the environment.
- (e) Personnel and organisational requirements.

MANPOWER PLANNING:

Manpower Planning, which is also known as Human Resource Planning, consists in putting the right number of people and right kind of people at the right place, right time, doing the right things for which they are suited for the achievement of the goals of the organization. Manpower planning has been variedly defined in the following ways:

- i. An integrated approach to performing the planning aspects of the personnel function in order to have a sufficient supply of adequately developed and motivated people to perform the duties and tasks required to meet organizational objectives and satisfy the individual needs and goals of members of the organization, (Osokoya 1987);
- ii. A process of analyzing an organization's human resource needs under changing conditions and developing the activities necessary to satisfy these needs (Garba, 2004);
- iii. A process for determining and assuring that the organization will have an adequate number of qualified persons available at the proper time, performing jobs which meet the needs of the enterprises and which provide satisfaction for the individuals involved. (Beach,1975);
- iv. The process of forecasting future human resource needs of an organization so that steps can be taken to ensure that these needs are met. (Teresa,1999).

It is clear from these few definitions that, although the different scholars or authors chose to group their perceptions of the phenomenon in their individual ways, there is a recurring common theme. Each of them agreed that manpower planning is an on-going process (integrated approach), not a once and for all phenomenon. Its process involves interrelated activities and the plan must continue to be modified to meet prevailing circumstances. As a plan, it is embedded in implementation programmes designed to ensure availability of adequate qualified persons. Such implementation programmes include recruitment and selection (employment) of required skilled personnel to perform jobs that will allow the enterprise to meet both the corporate and individual goals. The plan implementation programme also entails training and development of personnel and performance appraisal as well as other related personnel administration functions.

Objectives of Manpower Planning:

Manpower Planning has two broad objectives which are:

- (a) To provide for the present and future personnel needs of an organization both quantitatively and qualitatively
- (b) To ensure the optimum use of the personnel currently employed.

The Importance of Manpower Planning for Industrialization and National Development:

1. **Key to managerial functions-** The four managerial functions, i.e., planning, organizing, directing and controlling are based upon the manpower. Manpower helps in the implementation of all these managerial activities that bring about organizational

growth and national development at large. Therefore, staffing becomes a key to all managerial functions.

2. **Efficient utilization** - Efficient management of personnel becomes an important function in the industrialization world of today. The setting up of large-scale enterprises requires management of large-scale manpower. It can be effectively done through staffing function.
3. **Motivation** - The staffing function not only includes putting right men on right job, but it also comprises motivational programmes, i.e., incentive plans to be framed for further participation and employment of employees in an organization. Therefore, all types of incentive plans become an integral part of the staffing function, which promote success of the organization and in turn industrialization of a nation.
4. **Better human relations** - An organization can itself be stabilized if human relations develop and are strong. Human relations become strong through effective control, clear communication, effective supervision and leadership in an organization. Staffing also takes care of training and development of the workforce; this leads to co-operation and better human relations as well as peaceful coexistence which translates into becoming a united nation.
5. **Higher productivity** - Productivity level increases when resources are utilized in the best possible manner. Higher productivity is a result of minimum wastage of time, money, efforts and energies. This is possible through staffing and its related activities (Performance appraisal, training and development, remuneration) for optimal development of the organization and the nation in general.

The Rationale for Manpower Planning:

In the traditional management approach to manpower administration, management assumed that it could always obtain the personnel it required whenever it needed them and therefore had no need to engage in formal manpower planning. Of course, this approach to personnel management succeeded because most of the enterprises were small in size, made few changes in a long time and employed simple skills. In modern complex organizations which experience fast changes in technology, products, market and internal structural reorganization and utilize a lot of high talent personnel, formal personnel planning is essential for viability and survival of the organization in a dynamic and competitive business environment.

Some reasons for systematic manpower planning in organizations include:

- (i) To determine and ensure future personnel needs;
- (ii) To cope with changes in competitive forces, market, technology, product and government regulations on personnel administration;
- (iii) To ensure that the organizations continue to maintain adequate stock of scarce, skilled and experienced manpower through deliberate personnel procurement and development policies, motivation, integration, utilization and succession plans;
- (iv) Manpower planning is necessary in organizations as an integral part of corporate strategic planning process. Organizational strategic plans define the corporate mission, goals, and strategies, and also evaluate the business challenges, organizational strength and weaknesses;
- (v) Manpower plans provide a necessary basis for designing and implementing personnel functions such as recruitment;
- (vi) To meet the requirements of government regulations on employment. Such government policy as equal opportunities for women and minority groups could necessitate that corporate manpower planning makes provisions for accommodating this regulation. The

quota system policy on employment in the public sector organizations of Nigeria is a good example of such governmental regulations that can necessitate corporate entities drawing their employment plans to conform with government regulations if the policy is extended to cover business or private organizations.

Other reasons include:

1. Shortages and surpluses can be identified so that quick action can be taken wherever it is required.
2. All the recruitment and selection programmes are based on manpower planning.
3. It also helps to reduce the labour cost as excess staff can be identified and so overstaffing can be avoided.
4. It also helps to identify the available talents in a concern and accordingly, training programmes can be chalked up to develop those talents.
5. It helps in growth and diversification of business. Through manpower planning, human resources can be readily available and they can be utilized in the best manner.
6. It helps the organization to realize the importance of manpower management which ultimately helps in the stability of a concern.

The Manpower Planning Process:

Organizations differ in the degree of sophistication they exhibit in their manpower planning process, some scholars in the field agree that corporate manpower planning is made of four major series of interrelated activities, while others propose five. Both will be discussed. The steps or procedures are as follows:

1. Analysing the current manpower inventory
 2. Making future manpower forecasts
 3. Developing employment programmes
 4. Designing training programmes
- **Analysing the current manpower inventory** - Before a manager makes a forecast of future manpower, the current manpower status has to be analysed. For this the following things have to be noted-
 - a. Type of organization
 - b. Number of departments
 - c. Number and quantity of such departments
 - d. Employees in these work units

Once these factors are registered by a manager, he goes for the future forecasting.

- **Making future manpower forecasts** - Once the factors affecting the future manpower forecasts are known, planning can be done for the future manpower requirements in several work units.

The Manpower forecasting techniques commonly employed in organizations are as follows:

- i. **Expert Forecasts:** These include informal decisions, formal expert surveys and the Delphi technique.
- ii. **Trends Analysis:** Manpower needs can be projected through extrapolation (projecting past trends), indexation (using base year as basis), and statistical analysis (central tendency measure).
- iii. **Work Load Analysis:** It is dependent upon the nature of work load in a department, in a branch or in a division.

iv. **Workforce Analysis:** Whenever production and time periods have to be analysed, allowances have to be duly made for getting net manpower requirements.

- **Developing employment programmes** - Once the current inventory is compared with future forecasts, the employment programmes can be designed and developed accordingly which will include recruitment, selection procedures and placement plans.
- **Designing training programmes** - These will be based upon extent of diversification, expansion plans, development programmes, etc. Training programmes depend upon the extent of improvements in technology and advancement to take place. It is also done to improve upon the skills, capabilities, knowledge of the workers.

On the other hand, (Beach, 1980) identifies a five – stage manpower planning process to include:

- (i) Identify the goals and plans of the organization;
- (ii) Determine the current manpower situation;
- (iii) Forecast manpower demand and supply;
- (iv) Design programmes to implement the plan;
- (v) Evaluate plan effectiveness through audit and adjustments.

- **Linking Manpower plans to corporate goals:** Manpower plans are a part of the overall corporate strategic plan and should base its forecast of personnel demand and supply on the strategic plan of the organization. If the corporate strategic plan for the next five years is designed toward diversification of business activities involving corporate expansions, new products, new plants, new markets and so on, the manpower plan should show an adequate preparation for the provision of the requisite workforce to implement the corporate strategic plan.
- **Account for current manpower situation:** The second activity of the manpower planning process is the preparation of a skills inventory which usually contains up-to-date information on the qualifications of selected category of personnel that currently serve in the organization. The skills inventory serves the following purposes:
 - (i) It provides the baseline for comparing the current manpower status of the organization (manpower supply) with the required skills specified in the manpower demand forecast. This comparison will reveal the degree of gap or significant difference between manpower need of the organization and the supply side (i.e. the available workforce). It will also provide information about what skills in the organization need to be developed through training or by obtaining them from external manpower sources;
 - (ii) It identifies the available talents within to fill specific job opportunities or vacancies;
 - (iii) It is useful for the preparation of a roster of qualified technical and managerial personnel;
 - (iv) The existence of a skills inventory enhances the opportunities for employees to satisfy their career aspirations through development and promotion (Beach, 1975).
- **Manpower Forecasting:** Manpower forecasting involves estimating the skills needed in the organization in the future time (the plan period) as well as providing statistics about

manpower supply which consists of the available personnel in the organization's payroll and the number to be recruited externally.

- **The Plan Implementation:** Forecasting manpower demand and supply and comparing the demand with the supply to determine the difference is the last major activity of manpower planning. The next stage is the implementation of the plan through personnel administration programmes such as recruitment, selection, placement, performance appraisal, promotions, laying off, training, development and compensation. However, before management decides to resort to such elaborate implementation strategies mentioned above, some preliminary measures are there to solve the problems of disparity between personnel demand and supply. When demand surpasses supply, management would plan for anticipated shortages through better utilization of the available manpower; hiring additional hands from outside, transferring employees to jobs where there are shortages of workforce; training employees to occupy or fill job positions that will enable them move up to higher skilled positions; compelling employees to work overtime and ensuring that employees increase their productivity. In case these policy instruments are not sufficient to solve the problem of shortages, additional hands from outside the organization may be employed either on part-time, temporary, full-time or permanent full-time basis. On the other hand, if Management anticipates surplus manpower supply in an organization, the situation can be avoided or remedied through:
 - (i) Training employees to move from jobs where surplus manpower exists to other jobs where shortages exist;
 - (ii) Reducing work hours and work sharing;
 - (iii) Curtailing employment, promotions and transfers to jobs in which surplus is anticipated;
 - (iv) Reducing pay and freezing pay increases (Teresa, 1999)

- **Audit and Adjustments:** The last stage of the manpower planning process is the evaluation of the plan to assess and ascertain if the plan goals are met; if not, determining the reasons for failure. Evaluation may entail modification of the goals and strategies so as to achieve success. This is necessary because the effectiveness of manpower planning depends on how well human resource needs are anticipated and met.

Conclusion:

Top management cannot dictate to every member of the organisation what each decision must be, but it can influence some, perhaps the most important premises on which the decisions are based. As a manager, understanding the implications of your decision, including the impact on departmental and organisational objectives, will help you to avoid costly mistakes and make decisions that add value to your business in order to achieve success which, in-turn, leads to national development.

Achieving national development requires the implementation of manpower plans through personnel administration programmes such as recruitment, selection, placement, performance appraisal, promotions, layoffs, training and development, compensation and, more importantly, personnel (manpower) management. Efficient management of personnel (manpower) becomes an important function in the industrialization world of today.

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