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Impact of Gender on Decision-Making

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Abstract:

The process of decision making is one of the most complex mechanisms of human thinking, as various factors and courses of action intervene in it, with different results. The imbalance in the distribution of power and decision-making positions between women and men is a consequence of complex processes and of the interplay between multiple factors that are deeply embedded in social structures. Women are under-represented in decision-making positions worldwide. However, gender equality and diversity are recognised to have beneficial effects on organisations, institutions and the overall economy. This article provides evidence that removing the glass ceiling – the invisible barriers which prevent women from reaching upper-level positions – may produce not only more equality but also substantial efficiency gains. This study is bases on secondary date collected from various sources to find out the impact of different factors that effects decision making.

Keywords: Gander, Decision making, Socio-Economic Factors.

Introduction

One of the most important factors determining the success or failure of the company is management's decisions. To my opinion, it is very important to have well-researched issues related to the management decision-making, different styles of advantages / disadvantages of decision-making, factors contributing to decision-making and views that should have the management during decision-making.

The process of decision making is one of the most complex mechanisms of human thinking, as various factors and courses of action intervene in it, with different results. Oarsman and Connolly (1993) define it as a series of cognitive operations performed consciously, which include the elements from the environment in a specific time and place. Narayan and Corcoran-Perry (1997) consider decision making as the interaction between a problem that needs to be solved and a person who wishes to solve it within a specific environment. There are several steps that must be followed in order to arrive at a decision: one must realize that it is going to be necessary to make a decision, determine the goals to be achieved, generate alternatives that lead to attaining the proposed goals, evaluate whether these alternatives meet

one's expectations and, lastly, select the best alternative, the one that implies an efficient global result (Halpern, 1997). This entire process is affected by personal and environmental variables. In effect, individuals may make different decisions depending on whether they feel their boss is observing them, on the amount of information they have, or if certain motivations play a relevant role in their lives.

Various Models of Decision-Making

Various views and theories of decision-making may be found in the literature. The following list of views, supporting theories and models is based upon categorizations provided by Keen and Scott Morton (1978), Huber (1981), and Das and Teng (1999). Das and Teng's list is, by itself, a meta-classification. The last two items mentioned in the list below, namely naturalistic decision-making and the multiple perspectives approach, are relatively new and did not appear in the mentioned categorizations.

The Rational Model

The rational manager view assumes a rational and completely informed decision-maker ("economic man"). People acting or deciding rationally are attempting to reach some goal that cannot be attained without action. They must have a clear understanding of alternative courses by which a goal can be reached under existing circumstances and limitations.

The Model of Bounded Rationality

The "satisficing," process-oriented view is based primarily on Simon's (1979) work unbounded rationality, admitting that the rational manager does not always have complete information, and that optimal choices are not always required.

The Increment List View

The logical increment list view involves a step-by-step process of incremental actions and keeps the strategy open to adjustment. Under Lindblom's (1959) disjointed instrumentalism ("muddling through") marginal, feasible changes are made, working from the status quota solve existing problems rather than towards goals. Other researchers describe a process of "Muddling with a purpose"

The Organisational Procedures View

The organizational procedures view seeks to understand decisions as the output of standard operating procedures invoked by organisational subunits. Huber names this view the "Program model," indicating that the decisions are pre-programmed in existing procedures as well as the routinized thinking of the people involved. Das and Teng (1999) refer to it as the "Avoidance mode" which views decision-making as a systematic process aimed at

maintaining the status quo at the cost of innovation.

The Political View

The political view sees decision-making as a personalized bargaining process, driven by the agendas of participants rather than rational processes. People differ on the organization's goals, values and the relevance of information. The decision-making process never ends, but remains a continuous battle between different coalitions. Influence and power is wielded in a deliberate manner and to further self-interest.

The Garbage Can Model

The garbage can view describes decision-making in an "organized anarchy". Like the political view, it assumes a pluralist environment with multiple actors, goals and views. The garbage can model emphasizes the fragmentedness and chaotic nature of decision-making in organisations, rather than the deliberate manipulations implied by the political view.

The Individual Differences Perspective

The individual differences perspective focuses the attention on the problem-solving behavior of the individual manager, as influenced by the manager's decision-making style, background and personality. It tries to explain how managers might use different methods or come to different conclusions because of differing personalities.

Naturalistic Decision-Making

Naturalistic decision-making is concerned with investigating and understanding decision-making in its natural context. The empirical foundation of naturalistic decision-making differentiates it from other descriptive models, such as the organisational procedures, garbage can or political views.

The Multiple Perspectives Approach

Midriff and Limestone (1993) propose the multiple perspectives approach to decision-making as an attempt to "sweep in" all possible perspectives on a problem. It is based on Singer and Churchman's (1971) concept of unbounded systems thinking, which assumes that any problem is a member of any other problem.

Gender and Decision-Making

The imbalance in the distribution of power and decision-making positions between women and men is a consequence of complex processes and of the interplay between multiple factors that are deeply embedded in social structures. Gender roles and stereotypes, gendered perceptions of leadership and the phenomena of the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass cliff' are some of the underlying factors. In addition, institutional factors such as the design of

electoral systems, internal policies and practices of political parties may either hinder or facilitate women's representation in decision-making positions.

In Indian politics the Panchayat have always a major role to play and the panchayati Raj institutions have the responsibility to give good governance in rural areas. Women representation in Gram Panchayat is visualized as an impact of 73rd Constitutional Amendment which advocates for one-third to 50 per cent of the seats to women members in Gram Panchayat. It was a land mark decision in different initiatives of women empowerment through political means because the socio-economic status of women in patriarchal society of India is still not improved even after seven decades of Independence.

In India roots of Panchayati Raj are very deep. Panchayati Raj Institutions in India are the prime instruments of decentralization at the grass root level. One of the important principles of democracy is that one should not feel powerless or feel that he cannot do much to change his situation. But he/she should feel that he is able to influence events and process surrounding him. It refers to activities not only formally empowered to make decisions, but also intends to influence the attitudes and behavior or those who have powers for decision-making. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is an important landmark in the history of Indian women's participation in the formation of democratic institutions at grassroots level. The most significant aspect is that the gender representation in the decision-making has been taken into account.

Factors Affecting Decision-Making

There are so many factors which affects the decision making ability. Some of the important factors are:

1. Psychological Factors: Psychology is the study of behaviour and mind embracing all aspects of conscious and unconscious experience as well as thought.

   Psychological Factors are those factors which are related to mental characteristics or attitude of a person or group. Main psychological Factors are:

   i.   Perception

   ii. Motivation

   iii. Learning

   iv. Attitude

   v.   Beliefs

   vi. Personality Traits etc.

2. Organisational Factors: Some of the most important Organizational Factors which affects the Decision-Making are:

   i.   Job Position

   ii.   Job Task

   iii. Working Environment etc.

3. Sociological factors: Sociology is the study of human social relationships and institutions. Some of the most important Sociological Factors which affects the Decision-Making are:

   i.   Social Status

   ii.   Role in Society

   iii. Culture

   iv.   Religion

   v.   Reference Groups etc.

4. Leadership Ability: leadership Ability is the most important factor for decision making. Without the leadership ability a representative wouldn't perform effectively or wouldn't implement any plan effectively. There are three main leadership styles: i.   Autocratic

   ii.   Democratic

   iii. Laissez –faire

Review of Literature

If a researcher wants to do research in any subject it is necessary that he should know the past of the subject. Without knowing the past one cannot do something new in the field. Review of literature paves way for a clear understanding of the areas of the research already undertaken and throws a light on the potential areas which are yet to be covered. Keeping this view in mind, an attempt has been made to make a brief survey of the work undertaken on the field decision making and factors that affects decision-making. This chapter deals with the review of literature concerned with the subject of the study. Many studies have been conducted. It highlights the decision making from different point of view and especially form gender point of view. The views of some of the important studies are presented below:

Uzonwanne F.C. (2016) in his article "Influence of age and gender on decision-making models and leadership styles of non-profit executives in Texas, USA", explored the relationship between the demographics, age and gender and the decision-making models (rational, intuitive, dependent, spontaneous and avoidant) and leadership styles (selling, telling, delegating and participating) of executives in non-profit organizations. The age of the executives also showed to be important factors that influenced executive's leadership styles and decision-making models as well. The age of the executives may be synonymous with the executive's experience working in business. Hambrick and Mason (1984) concluded that a manager's personal experience and values may be concluded from perceptible demographic categories, such as age.

Alonso-Almeida & Bremser K. (2015) in their research paper titled "Does gender specific decision making exist?" analysed that some significant gender differences in strategic management decisions in crisis times and in strategic choices. Nevertheless, no differences were found in organizational performance. The purpose of this paper is to explore management decisions during the on-going financial crisis from a gender perspective. From a managerial perspective, their findings reinforced the need to break the glass ceiling for women and promote women to top management positions by demonstrating that women are not less effective than men. Indeed, according to one study (Alonso-Almeida, 2013), women were more effective. The findings also indicate that women provide new ways to successfully address financial crises.

Sadhu G. & Sharma C.B. (2014) in their research paper "Factors Influencing Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution: A Study of Rajasthan", analysed that the reservation for women can be an important impetus to women's empowerment in Rajasthan, India on local level but it is not a guarantee for participation of the elected women. Women were actively prevented from participating in panchayat activities by male family members and other members of the panchayat itself. The male members often insisted on attending meetings in place of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs). Male Panchayat members took advantage of the low levels of literacy and lack of knowledge and experience to take decisions in the absence of EWRs and tried to keep them out of important meetings..

Nagaraja S. &Kusugal P.S. (2014) worked on "Role of Tribal Women in Decision Making Process through Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs): A Sociological Analysis". They examined the Role of Tribal Women in decision making process through Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), in Chitrdurga District of Karnataka. They revealed that politics has helped tribal women to improve their position. This is also very Good development in empowerment process among tribal women.

Reiter, K. K. (2013) in his study "Gender Differences in Decision Making When Faced with Multiple Options", tested the gender differences in decision-making patterns when multiple options were available among college students. He tested this by measuring the amount of time it took students to choose a food line to wait in at the cafeteria, predicting that males would not spend as much time observing all of the different options as females would. 116 male students and 116 female students from two separate cafeterias on two different campuses participated in the study. The researcher found that when males had formed a routine and were in their more natural environment, they were quicker to choose a line than females, but when in a less familiar situation, males and females did not significantly differ in the amount of time it took to choose their food line.

Missri E. (2008) in his research paper titled "Gender Differences in Decision Making Processes: A Computerized Experiment" concluded that there is no clear evidence which shows that neither gender is better than the other while making decisions. Both have similarities in many of their choices and differences in some other aspects; however no single gender is inferior to the other while making decisions.

Glover S.H. et al. (2002) in their article "Gender Differences in Ethical Decision Making" revisited the influence of the individual variable of gender on ethical decision making. Using a laboratory format and decision exercises that attempted to create realistic business conflict situations through decision scenarios, the influence of demographic factors, specially gender and the moral intensity of the conflict situation on ethical decision making.

Conclusion

Women represent half of the World's population and majority of them is engaged in work that contributes to the life and economic status of their family. Women in India traditionally have faced, and continue to face, many form of violence simply because they are women. Women still face many obstacles in their fight for representation. Women may be politically active, but once married, they disappear from the political scene. Women still face many obstacles in

their fight for representation. Providing reservation for women has not effectively enabled women to participate in the decision making process through Panchayat. To gain their rightful place in every field of activity there is a long struggle ahead of women. The present study revile that women ion the modern world is not too far away from men in any field

Three major findings uncovered in their study are:

i. Women were more likely to make ethical choices than men,

ii. Years of work experience correlated with higher levels of ethical behavior in two of the four choices; and

iii. High levels of need for achievement correlated with high levels of ethical decision making two of the four choice.

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