

AN APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DECISION MAKING IN ORGANIZATION

Nichodemus Obioma Ejimabo, PhD, MA, BA.
Wayland Baptist University Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

Abstract

This study examined the vital approach to understanding leadership decision making in organizational leadership and management activities. The purpose of this paper is focused and centered on the best approach to understanding the leadership decision making process (LDMP) among leaders and managers in organizational activities. This phenomenological qualitative paradigm which focused on essence or structure of an experience was used in order to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges affecting effectiveness, clarity, and success among organizational leadership and managements in business practices. Two hundred and sixteen organizational leaders from some cities and states in North America (Canada, Mexico, and United States) participated in this study and identified how they acquired their leadership role, knowledge, and skills. The findings from this investigation suggest that organizational leaders should allow their skilled subordinates - individuals and/or groups to participate in the decision making process mostly when their involvement will enhance the quality and/or acceptance of the decision by everybody at the workplace.

Keywords: Organization, Leadership, Management, and Decision-making

Introduction

In organizational leadership and management operations, decision making has emerged as one of the most dynamic, ongoing, challenging, and active areas of leadership investigations. Organizational leadership functions (OLF) are critical, challenging, special, subtle, and complex in nature. Too often we confuse things like personal style and a position of authority with leadership. Leadership is not only about the individual or groups of individual's formal position, power, authority, behavior, personality trait, a set of important objectives, inspiration, delegation, and charisma; instead it must be all inclusive, ongoing, strategic, systemic, productive, positive, as

well as influential and goal oriented. It must be centered on goal accomplishment, mission and vision fulfillment, team building, success, and profit making. This study was centered on understanding the best approach to leadership decision making among organizational executives, leaders, managers, and employees in organizations' practices and effectiveness with regard to goal attainment and success. Leaders need to understand that every organization is a systemic network that is both complex and dynamic in nature. People in leadership positions are faced everyday with decision making challenges. Leadership decision making (LDM) is an essential skill and tool for most business operations. The survival of every organization depends on the way their leadership leaders make decisions that affect everyone in the business. These decisions are the ones leading to significant commitment of resources, with significant impact on the firm as a whole and its long-term performance (Marsh, Barwise, Thomas, & Wensley, 1988).

Leadership decision making process (LDMP) is always crucial and at the center of all businesses in our world today. Barret, Balloud and Weinstein (2005) described leadership decision making in organizations as the process of "using critical thinking skills to optimize a decision" (p.214). Leaders must know what decisions to make and keep the interest of all stakeholders involved. Followers will be less committed to the team if their leaders doubt the decisions they make in the organization. Employees active involvement should be considered in most decision making for they (employees) are the ones to implement these decisions. Organizational leaders and managers should create a participative climate by sharing the information and involving the employees in decision making (Tesluck et al., 1999; Wanous et al., 2000). Encouraging the employees to express their ideas relating to work concerns is the practice of information sharing (Cabrera et al., 2003).

LDM is a dynamic process of choosing from the best different alternatives and associated with the systemic act of making a choice. Therefore, to clearly understand the process of organizational decision making, leadership must define what the future should look like, aligns with that vision, and inspire them to make it happen despite the challenges and obstacles involved. Leaders must know how to lead as well as manage, otherwise, without leading as well as managing effectively, today's organizations will face the threat of extinction (Kotter, 1990). The best approach to lead, and manage an organization effectively is to understand the organization in all its entity, and its growth, success, while basing all goal accomplishments solely on the mission and vision of the organization.

The LDMP in an organization is an essential construct for all business leaders and managers to define their managerial behavior, skills, roles, intelligence, competency, commitment, dedication, creativity, and their

expectations of each other in their goal attainment. The author was determined to providing leadership decision making process that would be based on data, research, and sharing of valid information; as well as on leadership and learning styles; mission and vision; strategic objectives, and goal accomplishment. A random study of two hundred and sixteen past and present business leaders, and manager from some cities and states in North America (Canada, Mexico, and United States) participated in this study

Organizational Leadership and Decision making

While leadership is defined as the act of an individual influencing others to attain their goals, followers maybe less be committed to the team if the leader doubts their decisions. Leaders are not like other people... they do not need to have the ‘right stuff’ and this stuff is not equally present in all people. Leadership is a demanding, unrelenting job... and it would be a profound disservice to leaders to suggest that they are ordinary people... in the realm of leadership... the individual does matter (Kirkpatrick, & Locke, 1991). As with decision making and all other organizational issues and challenges, overcoming any kind of small deficiency can help leaders become more dynamic and successful in their organizations as well as in the society. Both leaders and managers must be aware and knowledgeable of the best ways associated with making good leadership decisions in their organizations. They need to know that whatever decision they make have consequences. These decisions affect their subordinates either positively or negatively as well as the entire organization. The success of any organization depends on the decisions their leaders make. Therefore correct decisions help in the successful operations of business in general. For Welch (2002), a decision has three components: *a goal, options for attaining the goals, and the selection of the preferred option*. Basically, the process of making decisions that would help leaders and managers in organizations to solve problem involves the following six steps: (1) *Defining the Problem*, (2) *Develop Alternatives*, (3) *Evaluate the Alternatives*, (4) *Make the Decision*, (5) *Implement the Solution*, (6) *Monitor your Solution*. Making good decisions is one of the main leadership functions and activities. The above mentioned steps are essential decision making techniques designed to aid leaders and managers in organizations in making proper decisions in their organizations, personal, and professional life. These steps help leaders and managers map out the likely consequences of decisions, balance different factors, and choose the best courses of action to take in their business operations. Effective leaders and outstanding employees in every business should be influenced by their policy and decisions while working together to attain strategic goals and objectives. The dynamic nature of any business indicates that leadership and sound decision making in every organization

must be for leaders and managers the direct result of knowing their criteria for success, the scope of their choices, and the inherent risk of each alternative (Nelson & Quick, 2003).

Decision making in businesses are difficult and very challenging among organizational leadership and managements. Also challenging is discovering the best approach to, how decisions are made by different leaders and how it works in an organization setting. People make decisions about many things different and under different circumstance or situation. Some choices are simple and seem straight forward, while others are complex and require a multi-step approach to making the decisions (Dietrich, 2010). Good LDM in many businesses is all about getting people to work together and to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or prevent that which ordinarily would take place in a particular organization. It involves influence, thoughts, empowerment, attitudes, and behaviors of others in any particular setting; as well as leadership creativity, common sense, assessment, analysis, and evaluation of the issue. In other words, it is a thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options with the sole aim of making a better judgment with reference to success and goal attainment in the organization. Below in figure 1 are some of the objective processes to consider in LDM in any organization.

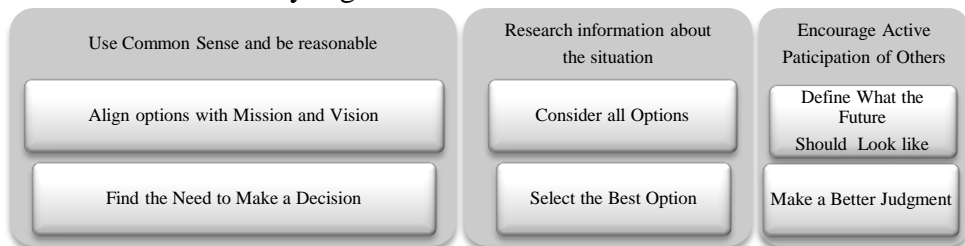


Figure 1. Other things to consider in LDM

Figure 1 above clearly showed some of the items a leader must consider in organizational decision making. LDM is always associated with the ability of the leader, to weigh the positives and negatives of each option, and consider all the alternatives prior to making a choice or arriving at a conclusion. In other for leaders to be able to make good and reasonable decisions in their organization, they must possess the following qualities:

- Possess good moral and ethical standards
- Having a vision about what can be accomplished
- Self-directed, takes responsibility, and be goal oriented
- Must be committed to the mission and to the people
- Able to assume risk of loss and failure.
- Able to express their vision clearly
- Able to understand people and treat them with respect

- Able to cope with the ever changing priorities in our organization.

The above qualities clearly showed that decision making in organization is among the leader's role and ability to get other people in the organization to do something significant that they might not be able to do otherwise. In order to help our current leaders, educate, and train future leaders, the need has been recognized for integrative research which explicitly considers the impact of context on strategic processes (Bateman & Zeithami, 1989). This work is designed to enable leaders and managers to make good decisions for their businesses as well as in accomplishing their organizational goals. Studies of complex social systems suggest that the major reason for (organizational) failure lies in the way decision makers think about and execute the change process (Smith, 1999). These activities include healthy working environment and trust that helps in developing effective communication and openness in the relationship between employees and management; between superiors and subordinates; between trade union and management; and among workers in the workplace (Thomas, Zolin, & Hartman, 2009).

Support of Literature

The review of related literatures in this study reveals that LDM in organization has emerged as one of the most challenging and complex areas of leadership and management future research. Making decisions is what leaders and managers do every day in their individual workplace. Thus, apart from individual or group outcomes, leadership decision making is at the heart of virtually all management work and a key driver of organizational outcomes (Barnard, 1968; Donaldson, 1983; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). Studies designed to examine the positive challenges of good leadership decision making as an ongoing leadership process (Northouse, 2004) may have application to any organizational success and goal attainment in the future. According to Lunenburg (2010) "Decision making is one of the most important activities in which school administrators engage daily. The success of a school is critically linked to effective decisions. Decision making is a process involving choices. The process generally consists of several steps: identifying problems, generating alternatives, evaluating alternatives, choosing an alternative, implementing the decision, and evaluating decision effectiveness" (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 10). The literature review of LDM P in this study consists of five main sections, namely: (1) *Purpose of leadership decision making*, (2) *The Role of leaders and managers in Decision making*, (3) *The Importance of Research and Data in Leadership Decision Making*, and (4) *Kinds of leadership Decision Making Style*

The literature review enabled the author to identify a resemblance, with regard to, what has been done and what needs to be investigated on

LDM. In these regard, new data, and information units are acquired, constructed, analyzed, and synthesized. Simon (1987) argues that decision making can be conceived of as a continuum of styles with the rational and non-rational components being used in a complementary fashion in effective decision making. Decision-making is about facing a particular given issue, problem, concepts, context, matter, question, challenge, or situation in your organization that requires you to decide or make decision on: what to do or not to do, with regard to, people to involve in the decision making or avoid, the nature of the situation, the urgent need to make decision, and the importance of the matter in question. For clarity, in organizational operations, effective leaders and managers often provide an encouraging atmosphere to perk up the performance and efficiency of their followers (Leiter & Maslach, 2002). All Leaders and other decision makers in companies should understand that a leader is one who can lead a group of people to accomplish common goals in the right direction, with cost efficiency, within the time frame, and achieving the desired outcomes (Nahavandi, 2004). In his opinion, Yukl, (2006), identified good decision making as one of the key components of leadership strategies in organizational management.

Purpose of leadership decision making

LDM is an act of being accountable and responsible in the organizational matters and challenges by their leaders. It requires maturity, common sense, knowledge, skill, ability, energy, self-discipline, sense of direction, and motivation on the side of the leader. In organizational decision making, good leaders provide an encouraging atmosphere to perk up the performance and efficiency of the followers (Leiter & Maslach, 2002). The purpose of LDM is always to make matters, issues, or challenges in the organization right, efficient, goal oriented, justifiable, clear, transparent, trustworthy, credible, and accommodating for all that are involved in the organization to accept and be comfortable with in their place of work. In reality, workers performances and tasks accomplishment always hinge upon to which extent they are recognized and involved in the organizational decision making. And because the fate of all employees in every organization depends on the decisions and policies that their leader makes for them, it is important then for leaders to develop effective decision making skills and strategies. All leaders should always consider the participation and involvement of their workers in some decision making in the organization because research has shown that organizations are as good as they people that work for them. Employee involvement results in superior quality decisions which produce encouraging organizational and personal outcomes (Parnell et al., 1992). It is of vital importance to understand that

employee involvement in decision making focuses on fairness of authority in the workplace (Locke & Schweiger, 1979) and the perceptions of employees regarding fairness are enhanced by involvement in decision making (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), especially when the employees prefer to participate in decision making process (Tjosvold, 1985) when the decisions mainly have an impact on their respective positions (Gardell, 1977). For Employee involvement depicts the belief of an employee considering his individuality or value in the work assembly (Bandura, 1982, 1986; Stryker, 1986).

In their opinion, Abbasi, Aqeel, & Awan (2012) maintained that effective leadership requires five major characteristics described by Oakland (2000), mission statement, effective strategies, critical success factors, an opposite management structure and employee involvement. Therefore it is imperative for organizations to maintain effective and visionary leadership to motivate its whole task force, promote and protect the organizational standards and reinforce the followers to attain the collective vision and goals. Thus, decision making and problem solving strategies include, but are not limited to brain storming, cost benefit analysis, written remediation plans, and an examination of possible choices (Wester, Christianson, Fouad, & Santiago-Rivera, 2008). According to Mumford, Zaccaro, & Harding (2000), problem-solving skills refer to a leader's creative ability to solve new and unusual, ill-defined organizational problems. Nahavandi (2000) claims that a leader is anyone who influences individuals or groups within an organization, helps them in the establishment of goals, and guides them toward achievement of those goals, thereby enabling them to be effective. For solid growth and development in organization, leaders must possess the ability to be creative; self-confident; organize; a desire to succeed; to bring forth a shared vision; drive and determination; problem-solving ability; goal oriented; and the all-important decision-making ability. Leaders are always the drive and captain in the organization. Constant, clear, and quality leadership is necessary for success (Everett, 2002; Buch & River, 2002). Many leadership scholars believe that the most important way of recognizing the real meaning of effective leadership is learning from the experience of successful organizations (Zairi, 1999a).

The Role of leaders and managers in Decision making

According to Kotter (1990), leaders must know how to lead as well as manage. Otherwise, without leading as well as managing effectively, today's organizations face the threat of extinction. The more skilled leaders are, the more likely they will feel confident in their abilities and competent to make good decisions. For it is only the leader that understands the nature and principles of decision making will be able cope with complex and

challenging situations more effectively than the leader who does not possess any of the ideas. In LDM, all Leaders need followers and in like manner, all followers need leaders in order to accomplish desired goals and outcomes in the firm. It requires humility and sharing oneself with others. A Leader is the one who embeds leadership rather than just supervising in making over the business values (Deming, 1986), assume and drive in leadership in gaining quality and quality control (Ishikawa, 1985), personal grip, commitment and involvement in managing the quality (Juran, 1993; kano,1993), who implants principles and ideas rather than controlling by swine forces (James, 1978), leadership can be learnt through experience and is learnable with a bulging outcome on quality (Crosby, 1997). They make decisions that involve everyone in the organization. These decisions may be major or minor, but in any case they generate varied outcomes in different ways that can affect the organization either, positively or negatively. Leaders and managers work hand - in- hand in organization to accomplish a strategic goal and objectives. Both leaders and managers make decisions in their organizations daily for the success, growth, development, and goals of the organization. In this regard, Drucker (1999) believes that management and leadership are almost one in the same. For him, management is a multi-purpose organ that manages business and manages managers and manages workers and work. In the views of Glanz (2002), the crux of good leadership is the ability to make thoughtful, reasoned decisions. In order to be the best judge, a leader should have critical thinking skills. They must respond quickly to situations. They must also reflect and be able to point out areas that need improvement.

The Importance of Research and Data in LDM

LDM is a major tool in the workplace, and is particularly important if you want to be an effective leader. The ability of any leader to conduct research with the sole aim of making decision is very important because using a data base approach is more culturally responsive and equitable with reference to giving specific information on a particular situation. A good research study will always enable any organizational leader to identify a resemblance, what has been done and what needs to be investigated with regard to a particular situation. Effective leaders and managers often provide an encouraging atmosphere to perk up the performance and efficiency of their followers (Leiter & Maslach, 2002). For clarity, while leadership decision making is the process of choosing among many alternatives, data based decision making involves using quantitative or qualitative information sources to inform choices (Picciano, 2006).

Data-based decision making (DBDM) refers to decisions that are based upon research, application, reflection, and adaptation. Decision-making is about facing a particular given issue, problem, concepts, context,

matter, question, challenge, or situation in your organization that requires you to decide or make decision on: *what to do or not to do, with regard to, people to involve in the decision making or avoid, the nature of the situation, the urgent need to make decision, and the importance of the matter in question.* It is the process of making a choice from possible different options based on the information gathered to help guide a leader through an issue or problem. DBDM involves a needs assessment which is “... a systemic process of collecting and analyzing data in order to identify needs and problems to be addressed in program planning, development, and modification” (Nagle & Gagnon, 2008, p.2207).

In the ideas of Krantz and Kunreuther (2007), they posited that a goal and plan based decision making model is an effective and sound approach to take in decision making; in this model, the individual is encouraged to focus on goals, not happiness or usefulness. In leadership decision making, it is useful for decision makers to seek information from research which may include: *past record of events, archive-documents, recent publications on the subject matter, and team consultations as well as interviews* which is the most efficient means of gathering information. This process enables a leader to weigh his information, check and balance his options before making the final decision on the situation. DBDM is the process of accessing and looking at the data that is available for a certain situation in an organizational setting and using that information to improve a situation. It begins with creating valid tests and measures to address a specific problem. This means that the tests and measures used must be reliable and verifiable. Without good data, leaders cannot make good decisions. In the views of Hixson, Christ, & Bradley-Johnson, (2008), they maintained that: “ student whose teachers use data based decision rules learn more than students whose teachers base decisions on their own judgment of student performance” (p.2142).

Kinds of Leadership Decision Making Styles

LDM involves the way any leader or manager organizes and runs their businesses. These decisions, no matter how big or small, impact organization in a major way. It's important for leaders to evaluate the situation before making a decision. Understanding your organizational leader's behavioral style is one way of knowing your workplace. Leadership style is the combination of traits, skills, and behaviors leaders use as they interact with employees (Lussier & Achua, 2004). There are three major leadership behavioral styles that can influence decision making in any organization namely: autocratic, participative, and delegative leadership style. The autocratic also known as authoritative decision making style is associated with a leader having a total control and ownership in making

decisions in the organization. Here the leader makes decisions with no consultation or suggestion of ideas from his subordinates. This style works well when decisions have to be made quickly and in emergency situations. One might use this style of leadership when the group is in danger of not accomplishing a task in a timely manner or in a crisis situation (Murphy, 2005).

The participative or democratic style is more inclusive of the group. This is a leadership style that allows, empowers, motivates, and encourages members of the group to express their ideas, and be involved in the decision-making process of the organization. Research suggests that perceptions of employees regarding a participative environment effect the job satisfaction and performance of the employee (Miller & Monge, 1986). When employees are involved in decision making process they recognize the underlying principle for them which results in high motivation and efforts (Wagner et al., 1997). This means that a participative leader must have a pioneering, imaginative and adventuresome mindset in order to empower employees to make decisions involving the organization (Smith, 2008).

The Laissez-faire otherwise known as delegative style allows the leader to delegate the decision-making responsibility to an individual or group. Some scholars and business educators have argued that the Laissez-Faire leadership style frequently has a negative connotation. This style works well if the leader is surrounded by motivated, skilled and talented group of employees. This style of leadership depicts an inert leader who is averse to stimulating subordinates or giving focus (Deluga, 1990). Leaders who use this style fail their employees because they offer no positive or negative direction nor do they interfere at any time (Webb, 2007), because in the views of Deluga (1990) laissez-Faire leaders renounce their leadership thus giving employees a wide spectrum of decision-making which could lead to amplifying their power and influence; and according to research leaders under these style shun goal-setting, opportunities to succeed, fail to coordinate organizational objectives, ignore responsibilities, and routinely avoid making decisions on important matters (van Eeden, Cilliers, & van Deventer, 2008). Based on these three leadership style, leaders and managers of businesses must be trained and educated to learn to shift their decision-making styles to match changing business environments.

Research Questions: Based upon the review of theories and empirical literatures on organizations and leadership decision making processes, the following research questions were designed:

1. *What are the factors that make leadership decision making challenging?*

2. *How is leadership decision making different from the art of problem solving in your company?*
3. *What factors facilitate the implementation of a successful decision making process among leaders?*

The investigator strongly believed that some of the answers generated from the above and other related questions that have emerged in the course of this study may provide meaningful and useful insights to organizational leaders and managers in understanding the best approach towards decision making processes.

Methodology

In this study, the author used the phenomenological qualitative paradigm which focused on essence or structure of an experience (Merriam, 2002) in order to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges affecting effectiveness, clarity, and success among organizational leaders in business practices. This methodology was based on the experiences of the selected participants and effort of the researcher to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given, but true to the facts with the aim of identifying what makes for efficient leadership decision making in organizations. Researchers have maintained that in phenomenological study, people can be certain about how things appear in, or present themselves to, their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983; Fouche, 1993). According to Groenewald, (2004) to arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness. Realities are thus treated as pure ‘phenomena’ and the only absolute data from where to begin (p.4). In their discussion of phenomenology, Welman and Kruger (1999) maintained that: “the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomenon from the perspectives of people involved” (p.189).

Margerison and Glube (1979) reasoned that in addition to the leaders’ choice of decision making methods; there are a great number of other variables that affect worker’s job satisfaction and firm productivity. The investigator identified the phenomenological qualitative methodology as the best and effective means for this type of study. He used his epistemological strength and position on data that are contained within the perspectives of people that are involved with organizational activities, leadership decision making, business leaders, and policy makers in organizational management. The principal concern in all aspects of this study at the outset was to collect data regarding the perspectives of the research participants about the phenomenon of the best and meaningful approach towards understanding sound decision making process among leaders in organizational activities as

well as to discover an avenue of better solutions to the challenges and complexities associated with decision making in organizations. Based on the researcher's judgment and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997) and in looking for those who "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988, p. 150), the key participants were limited to the perceptions, experiences and views of 216 past and current business executive leaders and managers from some cities and states in North America (Canada, Mexico, and United States) who were asked to participate in this study of organizational leadership decision making process.

Data Collection

Data was randomly collected from all the selected participants that consist of the following: 70 leaders and executive managers from Canada; 106 leaders from U.S.A; and 40 leaders and managers from Mexico. The data collection include: (1) Qualitative - individual and semi-structured interview with the selected participants forming twelve groups of different individual leaders, (2) survey data which was collected as a response to the questionnaire and used *only* to support the qualitative data, (3) selected leaders and managers useful responses to the research questions, (4) examining the leadership literatures over the past 12 years, (5) supplementary information from archives with reference to internal documents and reports. Both structured and unstructured in-depth phenomenological interview was used to obtain data from the organizational leaders and executive managers. In their views, Bentz and Shapiro (1998) and Kensit (2000) caution that the researcher must allow the data to emerge: "Doing phenomenology" means capturing "rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings" (p. 104). All selected individuals and each group participated in three separate interviews to avoid responses being filtered only in the single ideas of a particular interviewee.

Data Analysis

Narrative analysis was conducted using an inductive approach recommended and described by Strauss and Corbin (1994). According to Creswell (2003), data analysis employed a concurrent nested model. The study followed a sequence of distinct steps in order to secure the reliability of the data based on participant's recall. The qualitative data analysis, which is primarily inductive and recursive process, were analyzed and organized into categories in order to identify themes or patterns as these facilitated a deeper knowledge and understanding of the major factors that influence LDM in businesses. The questionnaire and final survey revisions were made to support and improve the content and process of the data collections, both

incorporated qualitative and survey (quantitative) items. The survey (quantitative) data was systematically organized, analyzed and given a basic descriptive statistical treatment in the study. The author allowed the selected participants to serve as a check to the study to ensure immediate validation as to the accuracy and credibility of the narratives in the data. The constant communication between the researcher and the selected participants added to the confidence and validity of the interview transcripts (Ejimabo, 2013). The author (*for validity and truthfulness*) used variety or approaches in this phenomenological research design that contributed to the truth. Among the approaches used was the member check (Merriam, 2002). This approach was conducted with several participants to avoid misunderstanding, accuracy in the interpretations, or transcription of the interview information given by the participants. For clarity, the subjects received a copy of the text to validate that it reflected their perspectives regarding the phenomenon that was studied. This process definitely contributed to the truth of the study. In this regard Schurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel (1998) emphasized that the truth-value of qualitative research and list a number of means to achieve truth. In compliance, the researcher used another approach called the “Thick Description” (Merriam. 2002, P.31) to provide readers with some valuable and meaningful information about the context of the study by giving distinct and comprehensive evidence that emerged from the data analysis in order to achieve a good understanding of the findings in the study.

Findings

The findings are based upon the purpose, objectives, and research questions of this study as well as examined in multiple levels (Creswell, 2003) that include three major sources: (a) open-ended questions posed through interviews, (b) demographics and observation, (c) the survey questionnaire. Thus, the three major themes that were derived from the perceptions, experiences and views of the 216 participants were as follows: (1) *Consequences of bad decision making in organization*, (2) *The Need to Include Subordinates in Decision Making Process*, and (3) *Ethics and Good Morals in Decision Making*.

Theme 1: Consequences of bad decision making in organization.

A sound decision making is very important to the growth and development of any organization. It is the ability of making good and reasonable choices by selecting from the many alternative available options. The ability of leaders and managers to make good decisions depend on the choice they make. The good decision will always lead to the success and attainment of goal while a bad decision which is the leaders or managers' ability to override or neglect their senses in making some choices or

choosing an option that at some level you know is wrong and unproductive to the welfare of the organization would always destroy the business. As three participants (Participant C 36, U45, and M 12) from the group stated:

... bad decisions are worst in any organization, as they only destroys, dismantles, and often leads to the closure of the firm. Both leaders and managers in businesses should avoid making bad decision because it affects the employees and organization negatively.

Most participants from all the participating countries are in agreement that bad LDM is a great barrier to the economy, jobs, growth, development, improvement, and the success of every organization. Participant U45 strongly opined that leaders must be trained in their role before allowing them to make decisions that would affect the entire organization. Leaders must know and understand that there will be consequences to every decision made in the firm.

Theme 2: The Need to Include Subordinates in Decision Making Process

LDM strictly involves a vision and inspiring others to believe in that same vision and goal attainment. While leaders and managers inspire followers to act on the conviction of believing the vision to perform the tasks needed to fulfill that vision; they should also involve them in some aspect of LDM, since each decision made affects their subordinates in one way or the other (Participants U13, M15, C33, & C49, July 14, 2013). This process will help to empower and push leadership decision making close to where the work is done by either motivating, encouraging, or enhancing distinct creativity and subtle innovation as employees feel a sense of ownership in the organizational management. In this regard, one of the participants from Mexico who is a business owner here in States for over thirty three years stated:

Leaders make decisions based on data, experience and influence. In my 33 years leadership experience, I do sincerely think that creative leaders must be willing to listen to their subordinates... in order to make the best decision.... When employees are involved in decision making process they recognize the underlying principle for them which results in high motivation and efforts. ... (Participant M17, October 17, 2013).

Theme 3: Ethics and Good Morals in Decision Making

Ethics is very important in business and each leader has an important role to play in ethical decision making. Since ethics is defined as the philosophical study of moral behavior, of moral decision making or of how to live the good life. The participants want all organizational leader and manager to play in ethical decision making process with regard to dedication,

trust, fairness, acting in good faith, and transparency. For them ethics and leadership moral conduct in decision making is an essential configuration of organizational leadership and management. In their views, Participants C91, C14, U33, U87, U70, & M02 believed that:

...there are some ethical values that leaders can use to help them better make their decision and serve the value that is most important to them in any given situation. These ethical standards should include; integrity, respect, compassion, justice, prudence, temperance, and common good among other things (Group Interview, September 12, 2013).

In order to make a decision in leadership, a thorough explanation requires appealing to a rule, using a theory, and applying a value. In simple terms, values are not a high-minded code based on personal or company ethics, they are a proposal for creating a work environment that drives accomplishment. Values offer people a framework for their decision, broad limitations for their ideas, and more independence to make a change (Participant U 201). Organizational leaders must possess the basic qualities that involve: *honesty, promise keeping, loyalty, dependability and consistency* both in leading and making decisions in their business. The findings in this study are in line with ideas of Green (2013) who believes that individuals and/or groups should be involved in the decision making process when their involvement will enhance the quality and/or acceptance of the decision.

Demographics

Data was randomly collected from all the selected participants that consist of the following: 70 leaders and executive managers from Canada; 106 leaders from U.S.A; and 40 leaders and managers from Mexico. The Table 1 below distinctly reflects the participants'country of origin, gender, age, education, and years of experience.

Table 1. The Demographics of the Participants in the Study

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Canada	70	32%
Mexico	40	19%
United States	106	49%
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	113	52%
Female	103	48%
<u>Age</u>		
32 – 41	74	34%
42 – 51	56	26%
52 – 61	44	20%
62 – 71	36	17%
82 – 84	16	7%
<u>Years of Experience</u>		
1 – 10	80	37%
11- 20	56	26%
21- 30	49	23%
31 - 40	31	14%
<u>Level of education</u>		
Technical Skill	78	36%
Bachelor degree	60	28%
Master's degree	58	27%
Above masters' degree	40	19%

Table 1 above showed the demographics of the participants with reference to their age, country of origin, gender, years of experience, and level of education in their jobs and leadership activities. Below in Table 2 are the results of the survey questions and individual leadership attribute items that was sent to the participants.

Table 2. The survey questionnaire results on individual leadership attributes

Individual Leadership Attribute Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
I am able to control my frustration and stress	10	5	4.33	1.03
I am able to cope with the ever changing priorities in our organization	19	5	4.77	1.26
I do not appear rigid and unable to change	11	5	4.32	0.67
I can influence others to achieve their goal	17	5	4.62	1.08
Able to understand people and treat them with respect	14	5	4.46	0.61
Maintain an appropriate knowledge base	16	5	4.54	1.09
Help the group understand the need to work as a group	19	5	4.77	1.26
I help the group understand the need to come together as a group	11	5	4.32	0.67
I am organized and I can organize others	17	5	4.62	1.08
Able to appropriately assign tasks and work-loads	10	5	4.46	0.79
I do show tolerance for diverse opinion	9	5	4.31	0.61
Demonstrate patience when the group cannot reach mutually acceptable decisions	5	5	4.00	1.02
I am respectful of the group's need to deliberate	16	5	4.54	1.18
I like new ideas and approaches to problems.	19	5	4.77	1.26
I act and appear appropriately as a leader	21	5	4.85	0.91
I make appropriate decisions about the length of time it will take to accomplish goals	14	5	4.46	0.61
I make sure that I understand what we are doing and why we are doing	9	5	4.31	1.10
Able to cope with the ever changing priorities in our organization	9	5	4.31	1.10
Appreciates the groups confidence in me and take my leadership position seriously	16	5	4.54	1.07
I am able to demonstrate an understanding of what is important and what is not	21	5	4.85	0.91
Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal relations with team decision making decision making.	11	5	4.38	1.10

The Table 3 shows the minimum score, maximum score, and means for survey questionnaire results on individual leadership attributes. Among the participants - only 21 (10%) of them believed that (from individual perspective) "I act and appear appropriately as a leader" which had a mean score of 4.85 (SD = 0.91) and another 21 (10%) of them that believed on the item: "I am able to demonstrate an understanding of what is important and what is not" which had a mean scores of 4.85 (SD = 0.91) were the highest in rank. "I am able to cope with the ever changing priorities in our organization" which had a mean score of 4.77 (SD = 1.26) earned the interest of 19 (9%) of the participants. "I can influence others to achieve their goal" item had a mean score of 4.62 (SD = 1.08) related to about 17 (8%) of the

participants. The five lowest scored items according the above survey results seem to relate to each other thematically. They include the following items: “Demonstrate patience when the group cannot reach mutually acceptable decisions” ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.02$); “Able to cope with the ever changing priorities in our organization” ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.10$); “I make sure that I understand what we are doing and why we are doing” ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.10$); “I do show tolerance for diverse opinion” ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.10$); and “I help the group understand the need to come together as a group” ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.67$). These items together showed that there are several of the outcomes that may result from a decision – which are either regret or satisfaction; both of which may affect best approach in organizational leadership decision making process in one way (positive) or the other (negative) in any business structure. In like manner, below are the results of leadership effective items that practically suggested that the leaders take their roles in organizational decision making seriously in order to achieve their organizational goals These items are: “I am able to demonstrate an understanding of what is important and what is not” ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.96$); “I like new ideas and approaches to problems” ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.94$); “Influence others to achieve their goals” ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.08$); and “I am respectful of the group’s need to deliberate” ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.18$). Most participants maintained that the ability to demonstrate an understanding of what is important and what is not in the organization is always a roadmap to success and accomplishment of goals

Discussions and Conclusion

This study examined the best approach to understanding LDM in organizational leadership and management activities that impact creativity, growth and effectiveness, success, and goal accomplishments in current organizations. The knowledge, stories, history, and long leadership experience of the participants were the tools and elements used in order to discover a pattern of meaning and achieve result in this study. Thus in the views of the participants, there is a great need and urgency to consider the complexities and unpredictability that are associated with decision making in organizations while reflecting on the areas of updates, upgrades, and improvements. For instance, the roles of the participants could be seen in most of what some of them shared with the researcher:

For me, valid communication is always the key to success. Having a two way communication will enhance the team’s effectiveness in positive leadership decision making in any business (Participant M41, February 11, 2013).

Most of the participants agreed that the leaders in the organizations should be active in data based or research driven process in their decision

making as information is power to solid and useful decisions. Thus, in LDMP, a leader must be willing to take responsibility and tasks, pursue goals, self-confident, exercises initiative in social situations, and willing to accept consequences in all organizational decisions. The findings from this investigation suggest that organizational leaders should allow their skilled subordinates - individuals and/or groups to participate in the decision making process mostly when their involvement will enhance the quality and/or acceptance of the decision by everybody at the workplace. Finally, the study indicated that there is a great need for change and improvement in decision making among organizational executives, leaders, and managers while accommodating technology, diversity, globalization; and encouraging good policy, teamwork, leadership effectiveness, and accomplishment of success. In that regard, the researcher is of the opinion that - there is need for future research on leadership decision making. He thus, concludes this study with the views of Glanz (2002), who maintained that the crux of good leadership is the ability to make thoughtful, reasoned decisions. In order to be the best judge, a leader should have critical thinking skills.

References:

- Abbasi, A. S., Aqeel, A. M. B. & Awan, A. N. (2012). The Effectiveness of leadership, performance and employee involvement for producing competitive advantage with a TQM Orientation: a Conceptual Framework. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3 (4), 83 – 90
- Babbie, E. (1995). *The practice of social research* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bandura. A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American psychologist*, 37, 122-147.
- Bandura. A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and actions: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barnard, C. I. (1968). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Barrett, H., Balloun, J. L., & Weinstein, A. (2005, November). The impact of creativity on performance in non-profits. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 10, 213-223.
- Bentz, V. M., & Shapiro, J. J. (1998). *Mindful enquiry in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bernard, H. R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Ethnography*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker.
- Brincat, C. A. & Wike, V. S. (2000). *Morality and the Professional Life: Values at Work*. Prentice Hall Inc.

- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2003). *Business research methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Buch, K. & Rivers, D, (2002). Sustaining a quality initiative. *Strategic Direction*. 18. (4). 15-17
- Cabrera, E. F., Ortega, J., & Cabrera, A. (2003). An exploration of the factors that influence employee participation in Europe. *Journal of World Business*, 38(1), 43-54.
- Cameron, M. E., Schaffer, M., & Hyeoun, P. (2001). Nursing students' experience of ethical problems and use of ethical decision-making models. *Nursing Ethics*, 8, 432-448.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative, and mixed method approaches*: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative research and design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crosby, P. B. (1979). *Quality is free*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Crosby, Philip (1997). *The Absolutes of Leadership* (Warren Bennis Executive Briefing). Jossey Bass. ISBN 0-7879-0942-4.
- Deluga, R. (1990). The Effects of Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez Faire Leadership Characteristics on Subordinate Influencing Behavior. *Basic & Applied Social Psychology*, 11(2), 191-203. Retrieved March 5, 2010, from Academic Search Premier Database.
- Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Center for Advanced Engineering Study.
- Despain, J. E. (2003). *And dignity for all: unlocking greatness through values-based leadership*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.
- Dietrich, M. (2010). "Efficiency and profitability: a panel data analysis of UK manufacturing firms, 1993-2007," Working Papers 2010003, The University of Sheffield, Department of Economics, revised Jan 2010.
- Donaldson, G. (1983). *Decision making at the top: The shaping of strategic direction*. New York: Basic Books.
- Drucker, P. (1999). *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.
- Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Everett, C. (2002). Penn States commitment to quality improvement. *Quality Progress*. 35 (1), 44-49.
- Finkelstein, S. & Hambrick, D. (1996). Top management team tenure and organizational outcomes: The moderating role of managerial discretion. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35, 484-503.
- Fouche, F. (1993). Phenomenological theory of human science. In J. Snyman (Ed.), *Conceptions of social inquiry* (pp. 87-112). Pretoria, South Africa: Human Science Research Council.

- Gardell, B. (1977). Autonomy and participation at work. *Human Relations*, 30, 515–533
- Glanz, J. (2002). *Finding your leadership style*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Green, L. R., (2013). *Practicing the art of leadership*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson education, Inc.
- Greig, A., & Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing research with children*. London, UK: Sage.
- Groenewald, T. (2003). *The contribution of co-operative education in the growing of talent*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Haynes, P. & Fryer, G. (2000) Human resources, service quality and performance: a case study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(4), 240-248.
- Hixson, M., Christ, T., & Bradley-Johnson, S. (2008). Best practices in the analysis of progress monitoring and decision making. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.). *Best practices in school psychology-V*, Silver Springs, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Hofstede, G. H. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organization across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ishikawa, K. (1985) *What is total quality control? The Japanese Way*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- James, M. B. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Johnson, B. L., Jr., & Kruse, S. D. (2009). *Decision making for educational leaders: Under examined dimensions and issues*. Albany: State University of New York Press
- Juran, J. M. (1993, July- August). Made in U.S.A.: A renaissance in quality. *Harvard Business Review*, 71 (4), 42-50.
- Kano, N. (1993). A perspective on quality activities in American firms. *California Management Review*, 35 (3), 12 – 31
- Kensit, D. A. (2000). Rogerian theory: A critique of the effectiveness of pure client-centred therapy. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 13(4), 345-342.
- Kerr, J., & Slocum, J. W., Jr. (1987). Managing corporate culture through reward systems. *Academy of Management Executive*, 1(2), 99-108.
- Kirkpatrick, S. A., & Locke, E. A. (1991). Leadership: do traits matter? *The Executive*, 5. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4165007>
- Korsgaard, M. A., & Roberson, L. (1995). Procedural justice in performance evaluation - The role of instrumental and non-instrumental voice in performance appraisal discussions. *Journal of Management*, 21, 657–669.
- Kotter, J. P. (1990). *A Force for Change: How leadership differs from management*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

- Krantz, D.H., & Kunreuther, H.C. (2007). Goals and plans in decision making. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 2(3), 137-168.
- Leana, C. R. (1985). A partial test of Janis 'groupthink model: Effects of group cohesiveness and leader behavior on defective decision-making. *Journal of Management*, 11, 5–17.
- Langley, A., Mintzberg, H., Pitcher, P., Posada, E., & Saint-Macary, J. (1995, May/June). Opening up decision making: The view from the black stool. *Organization Science*, 6 (3), 260-279.
- Leiter, M. and Maslach, C., (2002), Beating burnout, *Human Resource Management International Digest*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 6-9.
- Lewis, C. W. (1991). The ethics challenge in public service--A problem solving guide. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Locke, E. A., & Schweiger, D. M. (1979). Participation in decision making: One more look. In B. M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 1, pp. 265–340). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). Managing change: The role of the change agent. *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*, 13 (1), 1 - 6
- Macintyre, A. C. (1981, June). *After virtue*. San Francisco, CA: University of Notre Dame Press.
- March, J. G. (1991). How decisions happen in organizations. *Human-Computer Interaction*, 6, 95-117.
- Margerison, C. & Glube, R. (1979) Leadership decision making: An empirical test of the Vroom and Yetton-model. *Journal of Management Studies*. 16. 45 – 55
- Marsh, P., Barwise, P., Thomas, K., & Wensley, R. (1988). *Managing strategic Investment Decisions in Large Diversified Companies*. London Business School: Center for Business Strategy.
- Marrow, A. F. (1969). *The Practical Theorist: The Life and Work of Kurt Lewin*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, K. I., & Monge, P. R. (1986). Participation, satisfaction and productivity: A meta analytic review. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 727–753.
- Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of Organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Mumford, M. D., Zaccaro. S. j., & Harding, E. A. (200, Spring). The leadership. *Quarterly Newsletter*. 11. (1) pp. 155 – 170.
- Murphy, L. (2005). Transformational leadership: a cascading chain reaction. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 13(2), 128-136. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2934.2005.00458.x

- Nagle, R. J., Gagnon, S.G. (2008). Best practices in planning and conducting needs assessment. In A. Thomas, & J. Grimes (Eds.) Best practices in school psychology (5th ed., pp. 2133-2146). Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Nahavandi, A. (2004). The art and science of leadership (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Nelson, D. & Quick, J. (2003). Organizational behavior: Foundation, realities, & challenges. Mason, OH: Thomson Southwestern.
- Northouse, P. G. (2004). Leadership: Theory and practice (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Oakland, J., (2000), Total quality management – Text with cases, 2nd edition, Butterworth Heinemann.
- Parnell, J. A., Bell, E. D., & Taylor, R. (1992). The propensity for participative management: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Mid-Atlantic Journal of Business*, 28(1), 31.
- Picciano, A. G. (2006). Blended learning: Implication for growth and access. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network*, 10 (13). Retrieved from: [http://sloanconsortium.org/jaln/v10n3/...](http://sloanconsortium.org/jaln/v10n3/)
- Pomerol, J.-C., & Adam, F. (2004). Practical decision making – From the legacy of Herbert Simon to Decision Support Systems. In *Decision Support in an Uncertain and Complex World: The IFIP TC8/WG8.3 International Conference 2004*. Symposium conducted at The IFIP TC8/ WG8.3 International Conference, Monash University.
- Schurink, W. J., Schurink, E. M. & Poggenpoel, M. (1998). Focus group interviewing and audiovisual methodology in qualitative research. In A. S. De Vos (Ed.), *Research at grass roots, a primer in care professions*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Shapiro, J. P. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas*. Mahwah: Lawrence.
- Simon, H. A. (1987, February). Making management decisions: the role of intuition and emotion. *Academy of Management Executive*, 1 (1), 57-64.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1994). "Grounded Theory Methodology." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 217-285). Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Stryker, S.(1986). Identity theory: Developments and extensions. In K. Yardley & T. Honess (eds.), *Self & Identity*. New York: Wiley

- Tesluck, P. E., Vance, R. J., & Mathieu, J. E. (1999). Examining employee involvement in the context of participative work environments. *Group and Organization Management*, 24, 271–299.
- Thomas, G. F., Zolin, R. & Hartman, J. I. (2009), 'The Central Role Of Communication In Developing Trust and its Effect on Employee Involvement', *Journal Of Business Communication*, 46, 287 – 310
- Tjosvold, D. (1985). Dynamics within participation: An experimental investigation. *Group and Organization Studies*, 10, 260–277.
- Van Eeden, R., Cilliers, F., & van Deventer, V. (2008). Leadership styles and associated personality traits: Support for the conceptualization of transactional and transformational leadership. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 38(2), 253-267. Retrieved March 7, 2010, from Academic Search Premier Database.
- Wagner, J. A., Leana, C. R., Locke, E. A., & Schweiger, D. M. (1997). Cognitive and motivational frameworks in U.S. research on participation: A Meta-analysis of primary effects. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 18(7), 49–65.
- Wanous, J. P., Reichers, A. E., & Austin, J. T. (2000). Cynicism about organizational change. *Group and Organization Management*, 25(2), 132–153.
- Webb, K. (2007). *Motivating Peak Performance: Leadership Behaviors That Stimulate Employee Motivation and Performance*. *Christian Higher Education*, 6(1), 53-71. doi:10.1080/15363750600932890.
- Welch, I. & Ritter, J. R. (2002), A review of IPO activity, pricing, and allocations, *Journal of Finance* 47, (4) 1795 - 1828.
- Welman, J. C., & Kruger, S. J. (1999). *Research methodology for the business and administrative sciences*. Johannesburg, South Africa: International Thompson.
- Wester, S.R., Christianson, H.F., Fouad, N.A., & Santiago-Rivera, A.L. (2008). Information processing as problem solving: A collaborative approach to dealing with students exhibiting insufficient competence. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 2(4), 193-201. DOI: 10.1037/1931-3918.2.4.193.
- Yukl, G. A. (2006). *Leadership in organization* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Zairi, M., (1999a), *managing excellence: Leadership*, *The TQM Magazine*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 215 - 220.
- Zikmund, W. G., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C., & Griffin, M. (2010). *Business research methods* (8th ed.). Mason, HO: Cengage Learning.