

## DECISION MAKING STYLES AND PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SPORTS: EXPERIENCE OF MANAGERS OF THE OFFICES OF YOUTH AND SPORTS IN YAZD PROVINCE

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**Annotation.** Managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports are part of decision making processes in sports and play a significant role in the development of Professional Sports in the country; as such it seems the analysis of their decision making styles would have a significant importance in the better guidance of the country's sports toward professionalism. The main objective of this research is to study and inspect the decision making styles of the managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd Province in relation to the development of Professional Sports in that area. Population and respondents of this research were all the managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province the total number of whom was 39. The research method was descriptive and in purpose an applicable one. Instrument for data gathering was the standard survey questionnaire of Scott and Bruce containing 25 questions in order to measure the 5 decision making styles (Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Spontaneous and Avoidant). The gathered data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods (Mean, Standard Deviation, Charts/Figures) and deductive (non-parametric) methods (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Friedman, Spearman and Pearson). The results showed that the Avoidant style of decision making has a greater significance and importance among managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province while the Rational style has the least significance among them. It was also found out that there is a significant direct relationship between decision making styles of Rational and Spontaneous; Intuitive and Dependent and the decision making styles of Spontaneous and Avoidant of the managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd.

**Keywords:** style, rational, intuitive, office, youth, sport, professional.

### Introduction

Professional Sports is defined as Physical Education or sports as a job; because of its great influence on the promotion and progress of the championship sports, athletic gains and international successes as well as gaining income and job creation, professional sports has attracted the attention of the government [5]. This is not only about what happens in the field but also it has transformed into a huge business and those who participate in professional sports are important and influential people in world arena. Professional sports get the most media coverage and almost all sponsorship and group supports go to this area. Also, since professional sports are at the top of the sport's pyramid, it creates a suitable basis for the creation of financial sources and cultural development of athletic organizations [4].

As the sport moves toward professionalism it requires better and stronger decisions; as a result sport administrators (managers) need to have the required skills in different situations to guide their organizations effectively and responsibly with appropriate and correct decisions [2]. Decision making is considered one of the inseparable parts of management and is manifested in each tasks of management [3].

Each manager chooses a specific style or combination of styles as his basis for decision making and choosing a suitable decision making style for the manager is a very essential factor not only of his own success but also of the entire organization. Managers, especially Physical Education Managers, in order to succeed need to pay more attention to the decision making styles and need to make their decisions based on the level of preparedness of the organization. Increased efficiency of processes at the Offices of Youth and Sports as the trustees of sports will have a significant role in the development of sports of our country and it is a no denying fact that the method of decision making of the managers of these offices would be an important factor to make the country's sport globalized and professionalised. Nowadays, the need for management and leadership is tangible and essential in all aspects of social activities [9]. Decision making is the basis of managerial tasks and a manager's skill in decision making is manifested in his task performance and the services he provides. Performing their tasks, managers are constantly faced with situations that require them to make decisions; this fact illustrates the important influence and position of decision making task in all managerial duties and organizational processes [19].

Simon says management and decision making are synonyms. Aside from Simon, other group of scholars including Peter Drucker have also defined management and decision making as one and have considered management nothing but decision making; they believe decision making is the core of management and performing tasks such as planning, organizing and control indeed are nothing but the decision making on how to perform these activities. In the vantage point of these researchers principle of management is decision making because it is with decision making that a manager performs all his duties. Newman believes quality of management follows the quality of decision making. He claims that decision making alone and on itself is the most significant task of a manager because the quality of plans and programs, effectivity and efficiency of strategies and the quality of the results of actions are all followers and consistent with the quality of the decisions made by the manager [6].

A manager usually considers decision making his main task because he always needs to think and decide which way to choose, what to do, how to divide tasks among others, and to decide which task needs to be done by whom, when, where and how [14].

Decision making is choosing a solution among two or more options in a preventive manner and in order to achieve a goal or a certain outcome with the least amount of risk possible; when we are faced with many options we have to decide and make a decision. Decision making is a complicated process and in order to use it effectively it is essential to know and understand it at first [13]. Decision making style of each person demonstrates the habitual pattern he uses when deciding on matters. In other words decision making style of each individual is a representative of his personality approach in understanding and reacting toward his decision making task [20].

According to Nutt studying decision making styles is a way to understand why managers use different decision making processes and decide differently in same situations. A manager's decision making style also depends on level of preparedness of his subordinates [1]. Decision making styles of managers has a direct influence on activities of the organization and employees and is an essential matter; due to this fact managers have the ability and power to create an environment that motivates employee's creativity and entrepreneurship with their appropriate and right decisions [21].

Rowe and Mason have introduced four methods of decision making; namely: Directive, Analytical, Conceptual, and Behavioural [16]. Hersey and Blanchard had given emphasis on the influence of situations that managers are faced with and based on that had enumerated four different methods of Telling/Directing, Participating/Supporting, Selling/Coaching and Delegating for decision making [1]. In point of view of Rringues two styles and dimensions, Authoritarian and Collaborative, are used by managers for decision making [16]. Scott and Bruce in their studies on decision making styles and influential factors on them, had paid special attention to internal and individual factors and personal differences and based on that had introduced The General Decision Making Styles consisting of five different styles. These five styles are: Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Spontaneous, and Avoidant [17].

Decision making styles has been studied and analysed by many researchers. Najaf Aghayi et al. (1381) in a research entitled "Study and Analysis of the Decision Making Styles of the Physical Education Administrators of Universities Accredited by Ministry of Science, Research and Technology" had concluded that level of preparedness of subordinates on itself is not a determining factor of decision making styles of managers; however level of preparedness of the manager himself is in fact a determining factor [11]. Parvande and Koohestani (1384) had mentioned that there is a relationship between management knowledge and decision making styles but it is not significant [7]. Hadizadeh et al. (1387) in a study entitled "Analysis of the Relationship of General Decision Making Styles of Managers in Public Organizations" had reached to the conclusion that there is a significant negative relationship between Rational and Intuitive styles and there is a significant positive relationship between Rational, Avoidant, Intuitive and Spontaneous decision making Styles [12]. Amery (1388) had described that there is no significant relation between Dependent, Intuitive, Avoidant and Spontaneous styles in decision making and the organizational environment; however a significant negative relationship exists between Rational style of decision making and the organizational environment as well as between organizational environment and job attachment of the employees [8].

Thunholm (2004) in his research on general decision making styles, studied 206 Swedish army officers' decision making styles and found out that there is a significant reverse relation among Rational decision making style and each of Intuitive, Avoidant and spontaneous styles of individuals; on the other hand he discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between Dependent and Avoidant decision making styles [20]. Spicer & Smith (2006) in analysis of the five decision making styles under discussion, examined two groups each consisting of 200 students of Commerce in a university in England. In the first group between the Rational style and each of Intuitive, Spontaneous and Avoidant styles a significant negative relation; between Intuitive and Spontaneous style and between Dependent and Avoidant decision making styles significant positive relationships were found. In the second group of students, the relationships between decision making styles were the same as the first group; in addition to that in the second group the existence of a significant positive correlation between the Avoidant and Spontaneous styles was proven [19].

As a result, managers based on professional necessities are decision makers and the quality of these decisions is the determinant of organizational success in accordance to organizational objectives. Each manager chooses a style or combination of styles as a basis for his decision making and choosing an appropriate style of decision making by the manager is an essential factor for his success as well as the effectively and efficiency of the entire organization [21].

Multiple number of factors such as organizational factors and environmental changes can affect the decision making style greatly and in fact in similar conditions managers may pick different styles. One of the other factors which can affect the decision making style is the individual differences such as gender and education but the literature on this area is unfortunately limited [12].

Offices of the Youth and Sports in provinces as the trustees of sports in each province, have a crucial role in increasing growth and development of the sports in the whole country as well as the international and globalized sports and with no doubt appropriate and correct decisions of the managers of these offices would be an important factor in the development of country's sports. Managers of these offices are faced with different conditions that are constantly changing and require them to make decisions, as a result managers need to be familiar with different decision making styles and relationship between and among them in order to be able to make the best decision when in different environmental conditions to survive the threats and dangers of the new condition and also to be able to take the most advantage of the new opportunities to advance and develop the sports in country. Based on careful studies and analysis of the theoretical and practical significances of this research as well as the cruciality of paying attention to decision

making styles of the managers as a significant factor in the development of sports, the researchers are aiming to study and analyse the decision making styles of managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province and the existing relationship between these styles.

**Methodology**

This research has been a descriptive study yet it has been done practically; it has studied and analysed the relationship between decision making styles of the managers of Offices of Youth and Sports of Yazd province as well as the relationship between decision making styles of the above mentioned managers and their demographic characteristics; in other words this research is categorized as an applicable one. Population and respondents of this research were all the managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province which was 39 persons. The pre-tested number of respondents was equal to the actual population. Considering the objectives of this study a survey questionnaire was the instrument of data gathering; this was the standard Scott and Bruce survey questionnaire for general decision making styles to measure and evaluate decision making styles of managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports of Yazd province. This survey questionnaire consisted of 25 questions. In this survey questionnaire there were five questions in order to measure each decision making style (Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Spontaneous, Avoidant) and to answer each of these questions Likert spectrum was used. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was 0.86. Demographic information of the respondents such as age, years of experience and level of education was also analysed. In this study the gathered data were carefully analysed using descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation and charts/figures) and deductive [non-parametric] methods (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Friedman, Spearman and Pearson). The statistical analysis and calculations were done using the SPSS software.

**Findings**

As it was discussed earlier, demographic characteristics of respondents were crucial information in conduct of this research. Based on the results, 28.2% of the respondents were female and 71.8% were male. The mean age of male respondents was 39.43 and of females 42.27 years old. 10.4% of the respondents had an Associate degree (2 year college degree), 56.4% Bachelor’s degree and 28.2% Master’s degree. Last but not least the mean/average work experience among the respondents was 16.08% years.

Figure 1 illustrates that the average usage of Avoidant and Dependent decision making styles among male and female managers and vice managers was the same. However, the average of Spontaneous and Rational decision making styles among female managers and vice managers was higher compared to their male counterparts; also the average of Intuitive decision making style is higher among male managers and vice managers compared to females.

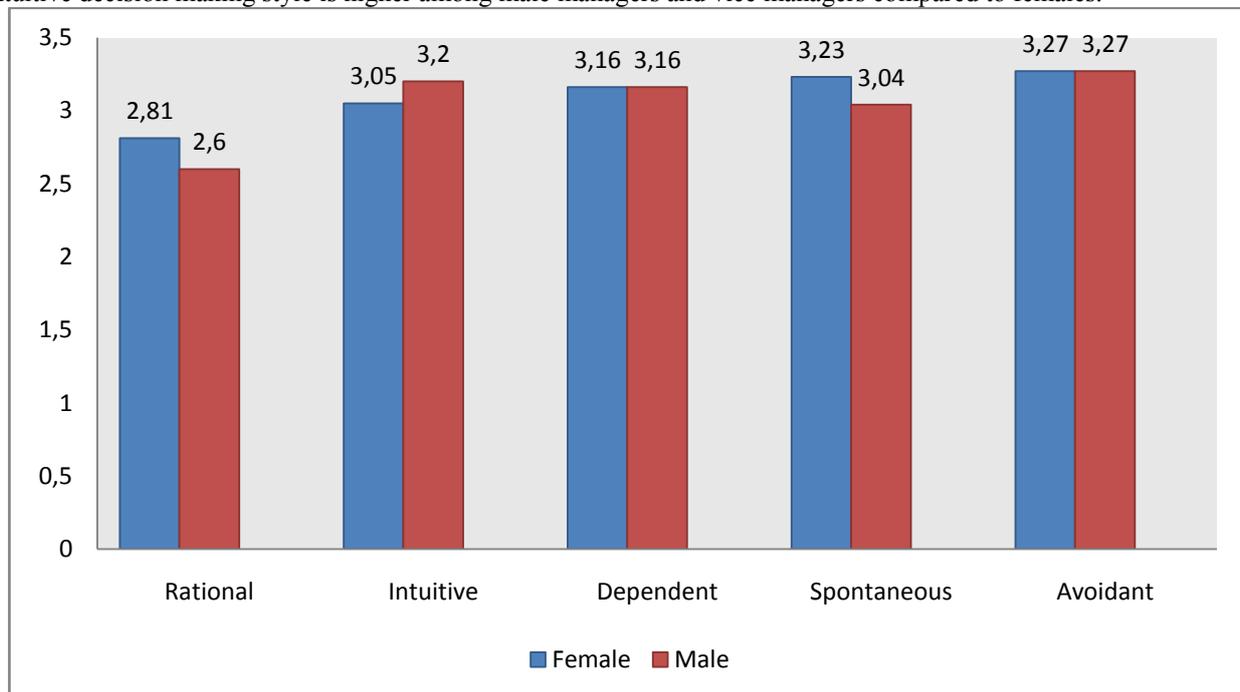


Figure 1. Comparison of the Mean of Different Styles Based on Gender

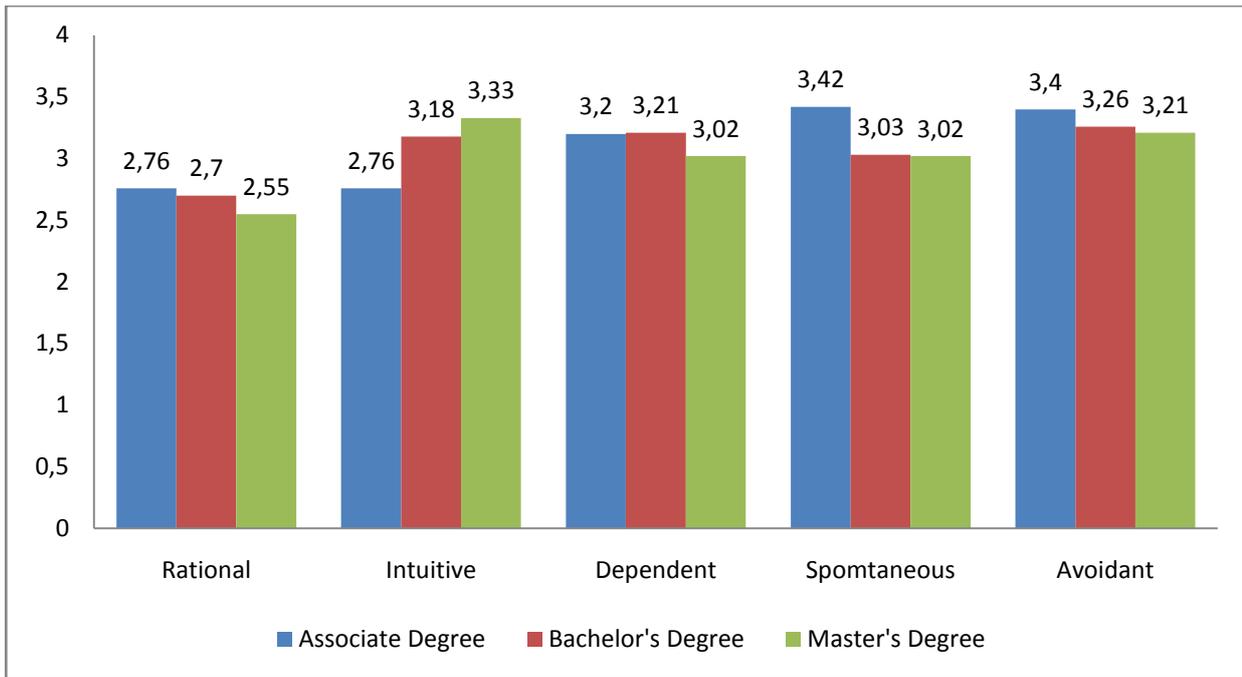


Figure 2. Comparison of the Mean of Different Decision Making Styles Based on Educational Attainment

Based on the results shown in figure 2, with the increase in educational attainment of respondents the use of Rational decision making style decreases and the average of Intuitive decision making increases. It is also evident that Spontaneous decision making style among Associate degree holders, Avoidant style among Bachelor’s degree holders and Intuitive decision making style among Master’s degree holders has a higher mean and average.

Table 1.

*Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test*

Statistical Indicators of Decision Making Styles	Mean ± Standard Deviation	Z	Significance Level
Rational Style	2.67 ± 0.51	1.61	0.011
Intuitive Style	3.16 ± 0.59	1.23	0.097
Dependent Style	3.16 ± 0.36	1.11	0.171
Spontaneous Style	3.09 ± 0.44	1.01	0.257
Avoidant Style	3.27 ± 0.46	0.97	0.299

As it can be seen in table 1 the data and reached results are abnormal and for this reason non-parametric test was used to achieve reliable results.

Table 2.

*Results of the Friedman Test; Comparison of the Priority of Decision Making Styles*

Row	Decision Making Style	Mean ± Standard Deviation	Mean of Ranks	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	Sig.
1	Avoidant Style	3.27 ± 0.46	3.60	38.44	4	0.001*
2	Intuitive Style	3.16 ± 0.59	3.44			
3	Dependent Style	3.16 ± 0.36	3.17			
4	Spontaneous Style	3.09 ± 0.44	3.12			
5	Rational Style	2.67 ± 0.51	1.68			

\* Significant level of  $P \leq 0.05$  is the basis.

It can be seen in table 2 that results of the Friedman test showed that based on the arrived significant level, there is a significant difference between priorities of decision making styles; in other words the decision making styles

at the top rows of the table such as Avoidant and Intuitive have more significance and importance among respondents while the Rational decision making style has the least significance among them.

Table 3.

*Comparison of the significant level of Dimensions of Decision Making (Spearman and Pearson Correlation Test)\**

noissiceD selytS gnikaM	evitiutnI elytS		nednepeDt elytS		suoenatnopS elytS		elytS tnadiovA	
elytS lanoitaR	sig	0/471	sig	0/207	sig	0/036	sig	0/523
	r	0/119	r	0/207	r	-0/337*	r	0/105
elytS evitiutnI			sig	0/001	sig	0/882	sig	0/439
			r	0/511**	r	-0/025	r	0/128
elytS tnednepeD					sig	0/055	sig	0/058
					r	0/309	r	0/307
suoenatnopS elytS							sig	0/001
							r	0/606**
*P<0.05 ; **P<0.01 ; n=39								

\* In shaded areas nonparametric test of Spearman has been used due to the abnormality of data. On the other hand in the white areas because of the normality of gathered data the Pearson's parametric test has been applied.

Results of Pearson and Spearman's Correlation Test can be seen in table 3 in order to answer the question whether there is a significant relationship between each of the decision making styles among managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province. As it can be seen there is a significant direct relationship between Rational and Spontaneous styles [0.337], Intuitive and Dependent styles (0.511) and Spontaneous and Avoidant styles [0.606] of the respondents.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the mean of Avoidant and Dependent decision making styles among male and female managers and vice managers are equal and the same. On the other hand the mean of Spontaneous and Rational styles among female managers and vice managers are higher than males and the mean of Intuitive style is higher among male respondents compared to their female counterparts. The results show that female managers and vice managers most often use Spontaneous and then Rational styles in their decision makings, in other words female managers with Spontaneous decision making style when faced with a decision making situation, decide immediately and without hesitation which is a sign of the feeling of urgency in decision maker and her urge to make the final decision in the fastest and shortest time possible. These findings are in accordance with Spacer and Saddler's (2005) point of view [19]. Female managers also use the Rational decision making style which is an indicator of decision maker's tendency to identify all possible solutions, to evaluate the result of each solution from all angles and finally to choose the best desirable solution in situations that require decision making. These decision makers are completely logical and possess enough information; they decide based on research, careful and comprehensive analysis and they acquire information from both internal and external sources. These findings are in accordance with vantage points of Parker (2007), Moorhead & Greyhen (1995) and Oliveria (2007) [10,15,17]. Male managers use the Intuitive style most often; this could be due to inherent and innate responses as well as general experiences and based on internal feelings and emotions. Same findings are also claimed by Paton and Kahneman (2003) [18]. Based on the discussion above it is clear that in doing businesses and achieving the goals and objectives of sports organizations, among which professionalism is at the top of the priorities, when there is a need for careful research and analysis and immediate decision making is required female managers are more suitable and appropriate for the position. On the other hand male managers are recommended in situations where experience is crucial. In the modern era, with the advent of globalized sports both of these conditions are happening at the same time and are equally crucial and sports administrators should pay special attention to it.

It can also be claimed that with the increase in the level of educational attainment the mean of Rational style had decreased while the mean of Intuitive decision making style had increased; Spontaneous style among Associate degree holders, Avoidant style among Bachelor's degree holders and Intuitive style among Master's degree holders had higher means. This result explains that managers with lower educational attainment use the Avoidant style, meaning to say while faced with a situation (problem or opportunity) they delay decision making as much as possible and avoid reacting to the situation; on the other hand with increase in educational level, managers use their feelings and experiences more often. These findings are in line with views of Parker (2007) and Spicer and Saddler (2005). As a result, sports organizations need to have people with higher educational levels in managerial positions in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives [17, 19].

Results from the Friedman test in this research demonstrated that there is a significant difference in priorities of decision making styles; Avoidant and Intuitive styles are more significant and apparent among managers and vice managers of Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province while Rational style is the least significant and apparent among them. It can be concluded from these results that the respondents avoid situations that require decision making and when put in such situations mostly use the Intuitive style which is based on internal emotions and feelings as well as previous experiences. This conclusion is in some ways similar to vantage point and studies of Spicer and Saddler (2005) [19].

The results in this research also demonstrate that among Spontaneous and Avoidant decision making style there is a significant positive and direct relationship; this is in accordance with results of the study of Moghadam, Spicer and Smith; however it is divergent and against results of Thunholm. Based on this discussion, it is fair to conclude majority of the managers and vice managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports in Yazd province when faced with a situation [either problem or opportunity] try to delay decision making as long as possible and avoid taking any action toward the so called situation. In case they are forced to take action and decide on the matter their final decision would be taken immediately and in the shortest period of time possible.

Other set of result tells us there is a negative significant relationship between Rational and Spontaneous decision making styles. It can be concluded that the tendency of these managers and vice managers while making decisions is to identify all possible solutions, to evaluate the outcomes of each solution from all angles and finally to decide based on comprehensive research and analysis of all information from both internal and external sources. Nowadays and in actual decision making situations because of the complications and constant changes, it is impossible to make decisions solely based on Rational style and as a result in reality managers decide urgently and fast.

There is also a significant positive relationship between Intuitive and Dependent decision making styles. Meaning to say that managers and vice managers who have Intuitive style do not necessarily reject rational analysis of a matter or situation rather, they believe in certain situations wherein careful analysis and study and systematic information on the situation is impossible or absent intuition and inner insights would be helpful tools to make an appropriate decision. This type of managers needs to have another person by their side to act exactly in accordance to his ideas while faced with problems and opportunities. Rather than consulting with others and making the final decisions themselves, these managers are completely dependent on views and ideas of other people when deciding on important matters. This point is in line with studies of Parker (2007) [17].

At the end, it is recommended that the managers of the Offices of Youth and Sports, in an orderly and consecutive manner allocate parts of their time to matters and topics of decision making to enable them to develop and enhance country's sports to the professional level; in this way they would be able to choose the most appropriate decision making style in changing and varied conditions to achieve organizational objectives. It is also recommended to the future researchers to study and research on the relationship of decision making styles of managers and their other behavioural characteristics in order to help managers understand the dimensions of decision making better and more in depth.

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