

# Exploring School Administrators' Perceptions on Participative Decision Making Process

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate school administrators' perceptions on the participatory decision-making process at schools as educational institutions. The method adopted in the research is basic qualitative research design, which is one of the qualitative research designs. Criterion sampling methods and maximum variation sampling methods have been used in the determination of the study group. The study group consists of 30 school administrators from various public preschool institutions, primary schools, elementary schools, and high schools. The study employed semi-structured interview forms in data collection, and the data were analyzed by content analysis method. According to the results of the research, the attitude of managers in the decision-making process differs according to changing conditions. In some cases, teachers are included in the decision-making process, while in others, they are excluded. Decisions are not made in a particular setting. Instead, there is a variety of settings used for this purpose. There are many factors that cause teachers to be included in the decision-making process. The most expressed one of these is that different ideas should be evaluated. Situations where teachers are willing and unwilling to the decision-making process are diverse. According to school administrator's, teachers are reluctant to participate in decisions that will bring extra workload to them. On the contrary, they participate in the process willingly when personal interests are at stake. There are many mistakes made by administrators in the decision-making process. The most common one of these is the tendency of administrators to make decisions alone. There are some expected roles in the process of deciding from school administrators. The most stated code by participants is that managers should support the participatory decision-making process.

**Keywords:** Education, Educational administration, School administrations, Decision-making, Participative decision-making.



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## INTRODUCTION

Individuals are faced with different alternatives and options in all areas of life. These alternatives and options expose individuals to decision making. Decision making is a part of individuals' lives and it is not possible to take action without making a decision. The decision-making phenomenon, which has a very important place in our daily life, also has an important place in organizational life. It is possible for organizations to reach their goals and objectives, to direct their actions, to plan their future and to take action in this direction.

Decision-making is the sum of intellectual, emotional, and physical processes involving choosing from various goals and the means, tools, and resources to employ to attain these goals (Eren, 2019). According to another definition, decision-making is the process of directing actions (Baloğlu, 2014). The decision-making process is used to make changes within the organization, prevent conflicts, settle the existing ones, and influence the organization members (Griffiths, 1956, as cited in Bursalioğlu, 2013). In other words, the aim of decision-making is to deal with problems and uncertainties, to overcome problems, and to reveal what can be done and how, and when can it be done (Eren, 2019). Decision-making is at the heart of administering and is the axis of other processes. To persist, the organization depends on the correctness of the decisions that have been made (Bursalioğlu, 2013).

Decision making has been defined as one of the most important elements of educational administration (Davis, 2004). Studies show that school administrators usually make decisions at regular intervals, and administrators spend about half of their time on activities that take less than 4 minutes (Crowson & Porter-Gehrie, 1980). According to another study, school administrators have about 400 different interactions on a daily basis (Manasse, 1985). Therefore, all these interactions and jobs require managers to make decisions. For this reason, decision making is one of the important tasks for school administrators who have to fulfill many different tasks.

Decision-making is a challenging process that causes psychological stress. Looking for and increasing the number of alternatives take great effort. Comparing alternatives in terms of advantages and disadvantages and choosing the optimum is hard and stressful. Decision-making is a technical matter and thus requires expertise (Eren, 2019). Decision-making is not instantaneous, it spreads over a certain duration of time and follows specific steps. According to Abelson (1985), decision-making processes are dynamic. They can proceed linearly or restart at an earlier stage. A decision-maker can repeat or restart the whole process depending on the circumstances that emerged during the process. They can proceed in one direction and then the other, or even give a long pause at a certain stage.

In today's world where expectations are high, there are strict demands and rapid changes, school administrators' decision making has become a complex process (Shaked & Schechter, 2019). Who makes the decisions is of importance in the decision-making process. It can be only one person who makes the decisions, specific groups within the organization or the entire organization. These changes depend on the structure and culture of the organization. In organizations with a mechanical structure, decisions are usually made by executives, whereas, in those with an organic structure, the entire organization can participate in decision-making (March & Simon, 1958).

There are various models for decision-making, and each of them is of a unique structure. Although each decision-making model is reasonable in terms of processes, it still may not help make the most correct and the best decisions. More importantly, there are moments when a strategy may lead to better results than another in a specific context (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Various models can be found in the literature, including the rational decision-making model, bounded rationality decision-making model, unstructured decision-making models, anarchist decision-making model, political decision-making model, and so on. The rational decision-making model states that the best decisions are taken by the rational ones (Simon, 1986), that the decision makers have all the necessary information, they can determine all the necessary alternatives and the consequences of these alternatives in the decision-making process, and that the best alternative can always be chosen (Hardman & Harries, 2002; March, 1994). The bounded rationality model, unlike the rational model, reveals that decision makers cannot have all the necessary information in the decision-making process. According to this model, the decision

maker aims to find the satisfactory alternative rather than the best alternative. Instead of doing what is best, it is about choosing what is satisfying. Managers pursue the option that is good enough in the decision-making process (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). In some cases, the decision problem may be encountered for the first time. These problems are unusual problems. There is no pre-planned or experienced decision model to deal with the problem. Such decisions are expressed as unstructured decisions (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2011). In some organizations, uncertainty is seen at every stage of the decision-making process. It is close to impossible to predict cause-effect relationships within the organization. In these organizations, the decision-making process does not start with a problem and does not finalise with a solution. Solutions are produced for non-existent problems, and alternatives are determined before the problem is solved. Decisions depend on luck rather than a rational process. Managers seek opportunities that are appropriate to existing problems, solutions, participants, and situations. This type of decision-making model is called the anarchist or dustbin model (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). The political decision-making model, on the other hand, sees decision making as a conflict resolution, consensus building, or finding a compromise way. Such decisions arise when personal preferences are correlated with each other. Two important factors in the model of political decision making are bargaining and discussion. Interest and pressure groups have important effects in the political decision-making process (Baloğlu, 2014).

One of them is the school-based participation model. There is also a school-based model of participation, also called participative decision making, shared decision making, and distributed leadership. With this model, the decision-making authority descends from the central government to the school level and the effective functioning of the schools is aimed. With this model, it is aimed to ensure an effective learning environment by including stakeholders in the decision-making process (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih & Patrinos 2009; Smit & Oosthuizen 2011; Somech 2010).

According to Lindelow and Heynderickx (1990), a manager can use several different methods in decision-making. They can consult their subordinates before making a decision or adopt a group decision system that relies on the majority vote. When the decisions are made by the group, the manager participates in the process as an unprivileged individual or uses their veto power at the end of the process. The participative decision-making process does not require an official change to the management of the organization. The management maintains their power and responsibility in the decisions that have been made. Decision authority can be shared with subordinates. DeMatthews (2014) believes that none of the decisions should be made solely by the manager. However, there may be occasions requiring managers to make decisions alone without including their subordinates in the process. Heller (1992) states that the participative decision-making approach of researchers is the best approach under every circumstance and at all levels and, however, that recent research revealed that it is not realistic.

One of the important issues regarding decision-making is about how decisions should be made. Hoy and Tarter (2003) suggest five decision-making structures. The first structure is group consensus. In this decision-making structure, the manager includes the organizational members in the decision-making process and the decision is made by the group. All individuals in the decision-making group have an equal stake in terms of making a decision. However, for making a decision, unanimity is required. The second is group majority. The manager includes those who will have a stake in the decision-making. The decision is made based on the majority's opinion. The third structure is group advisory. At this point, the manager asks individuals for their opinions and discusses these opinions with them. At the end of this process, however, it is the manager who makes the decision, which might be in accordance with the opinions of others or just the opposite. The fourth structure is individual advisory. Individual advisory is a structure in which the manager consults experts for their opinion and then decides on their own. This decision can either reflect the expert opinions or oppose them. The last structure is unilateral. At this point, the manager takes decisions on their own without counseling a group or an expert. According to Mokoena and Machaisa (2018), the decision-making process in schools is now carried out with greater participation of all stakeholders.

Decision-making is extremely important in educational institutions as well as other organizations. Educational institutions are organizations made up of many groups including administrators, teachers,

students, parents, and shareholders. This is why who makes the decisions, who should make the decisions, consequences of the decisions made, whether to include teachers in the decision-making processes, etc. have been among the topics of discussion.

According to [Aydın \(1994\)](#), teachers' participation in decision-making plays a crucial role in ensuring that the decisions are understood correctly, internalized, and implemented in an effective way. In addition, involvement in the decision-making process helps teachers resonate with the school's objectives and programs. In their study, [Sukirno and Siengthai \(2011\)](#) revealed that involvement in decision-making improved academic and organizational performance. Other studies also found that school administrators' decision-making styles influence teachers' job satisfaction ([Ölçüm, 2015](#)), and perceived school leader support has a direct impact on teacher collaboration ([Honinigh & Hooge, 2013](#)). [Güçlü, Özer, Kurt, and Koşar \(2015\)](#) showed in their study that a school administrator's personality influences participative decision making. Thus, school administrators represent one of the main factors influencing the decision-making process.

Studies revealed that individuals' willingness to participate in decision-making changes, in which several factors play a part ([Güçlü et al., 2015](#); [Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013](#); [Smylie, 1992](#); [Türk & Tulunay Ateş, 2019](#); [Beytekin & Kılıç, 2021](#)). [Güçlü et al. \(2015\)](#) argues that in the decision-making process, school administrators are mostly influenced by assistant principals, senior education administrators, and teachers. On the other hand, parents, non-teaching staff, and non-governmental organizations are the least effective in this process. [Smylie \(1992\)](#) showed that teachers' willingness to involve in decisions differs, that the professional relationship between the teacher and the administrator is the most influential factor in their involvement in decisions, and that willingness to participate might reconcile conflicting professional beliefs and relationships. According to the study carried out by [Türk and Tulunay Ateş \(2019\)](#), school administrators argue that teachers are most willing to participate in decisions concerning employee rights and education. [Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis \(2013\)](#) put forth that teachers have a higher level of participation in decisions about students and teachers, but their level of participation in the administrative decisions is low. [Eriş et al. \(2017\)](#) concluded that teachers are more willing to participate in educational decisions rather than administrative decisions. One of the factors in the emergence of all this is the perspectives of school administrators on the decision-making process. Because, research show that school principals do not allow the participation of subordinates in the decision-making process or that subordinates are not included in this process at all. Underlying this thought lies the thought that participation is inefficient ([Bagarette 2011](#); [Baruth 2013](#); [Heystek, 2010](#)).

Literature research revealed different results as to the involvement of teachers in the decision-making processes. [Babaoğlan and Yılmaz \(2012\)](#) conclude that most teachers are involved in the decision-making process. On the other hand, according to [Üzüm and Kurt \(2019\)](#), school administrators fall short of including teachers in decision-making. In their study, [Can and Serençelik \(2016\)](#) found teachers' involvement in school management to be insufficient.

Studies also revealed that factors that are influential in decision-making vary by educational organizations ([Sezer, 2016](#); [Üzüm & Kurt, 2019](#)). [Sezer \(2016\)](#) found that the most important factors affecting school principals' decision-making are laws and regulations, whereas teachers, assistant principals, and school's educational purposes represent the other factors that are influential in the process. [Üzüm and Kurt \(2019\)](#) revealed school principals, legislation, ministry, directorates of national education, and assistant principals as the most influential factors in the decision-making. When teachers are examined in terms of decision-making process, [Smylie \(1992\)](#) concluded that the working relations between the teacher and the administrator are the most important factor in the participation of teachers in the decision-making process.

Some studies in the literature include studies on the results of participative decision making. Studies have shown that administrators strengthen schools by providing teachers with the opportunity to make common decisions ([Balyer et al., 2017](#)), increase teachers' sense of efficacy and job satisfaction ([Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013](#)), organizational performance ([Ceballos López & Saiz Linares, 2019](#); [Daryadi et al., 2018](#); [Wadesango, 2012](#)) and increase student performance ([Ceballos López et al., 2019](#);

Wadesango, 2012). The factor that hinders the participation of teachers in the decision-making process has been shown to be the high centralization feature of the education system (Hammad, 2010).

It is seen that these studies focus on the results of participative decision making. In addition, it is seen that most of the studies are examined in a quantitative context (Ceballos López et al., 2019; Daryadi, et al., 2018; Eriş et al., 2017; Güçlü et al., 2015; Smyle, 1992; Üzüm and Kurt, 2019). Some studies in the literature were carried out with participants at only one school level (Babaoğlan and Yılmaz, 2012; Can and Serençelik, 2017; Ceballos López et al., 2019). Therefore, it is seen that school administrators are participants and qualitative studies focusing on the opinions of administrators are quite limited. In addition, it is seen that there are limited studies in the literature in which the views of school administrators working at different educational levels are handled with a holistic approach. The purpose of this research is to reveal the opinions of school administrators on the participative decision-making process in educational institutions. For this purpose, answers to the following three basic questions will be sought:

- How does the decision-making process work in schools according to school administrators?
- What do school administrators think about the participation of teachers in the decision-making process?
- What are the expected roles from the school administrator in the decision-making process?

The target audience of this research is school administrators. The target of this research is to examine the phenomenon of participative decision making from the perspective of school administrators at different education levels, to reveal the opinions of administrators towards participative decision making, to provide school administrators with an insight in practice and to examine this gap in the above-mentioned literature with a holistic approach.

## METHOD

### Research Design

In this study, the basic qualitative research design, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Merriam (2009) defines basic qualitative research work as a pattern used by researchers interested in discovering how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their own experiences, and the meaning they ascribe to their experiences. In this research, it is aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of what school administrators experience in the decision-making process, how the process develops, their perceptions and experiences about the process. For this reason, basic qualitative research design was used in the research.

### Study Group

The study group has been designated through the methods of criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling, both of which are among the purposive sampling methods favorable in qualitative studies. Maximum variation sampling aims to reflect to the utmost degree the variety of individuals the problem might concern. The criterion-sampling model, on the other hand, represents a method of studying all cases that satisfy a certain set of criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The criterion of sampling in this study is to make sure that individuals have been working for at least two years at preschool, primary, and elementary education institutions or at a high school. The reason for determining this sampling method is the assumption that the opinions of the administrators about the decision-making process at school are formed within a certain period. In addition, in compliance with the maximum variation method, school administrators working at a preschool, primary, and elementary education institution or at a high school are included in the study. Because, in this study, it is aimed to obtain as many different views as possible. Since each school's culture, background, experiences and perspectives are different, individuals who will reflect this difference are included in the research.

**Tablo 1.** *Participant information*

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Seniority</b>
K-1	Preschool	Female	3-10 years
K-2	Preschool	Female	11-20 years
K-3	Preschool	Female	3-10 years
K-4	Preschool	Female	3-10 years
K-5	Preschool	Female	11-20 years
K-6	Preschool	Female	3-10 years
K-7	Primary school	Female	11-20 years
K-8	Primary school	Male	3-10 years
K-9	Primary school	Male	21 years and above
K-10	Primary school	Female	11-20 years
K-11	Primary school	Male	3-10 years
K-12	Primary school	Male	21 years and above
K-13	Primary school	Female	3-10 years
K-14	Primary school	Male	11-20 years
K-15	Middle school	Female	11-20 years
K-16	Middle school	Male	11-20 years
K-17	Middle school	Female	3-10 years
K-18	Middle school	Male	11-20 years
K-19	Middle school	Male	21 years and above
K-20	Middle school	Female	11-20 years
K-21	Middle school	Male	3-10 years
K-22	Middle school	Female	21 years and above
K-23	High school	Male	3-10 years
K-24	High school	Female	11-20 years
K-25	High school	Male	11-20 years
K-26	High school	Male	21 years and above
K-27	High school	Female	11-20 years
K-28	High school	Male	11-20 years
K-29	High school	Male	21 years and above
K-30	High school	Male	11-20 years

As shown in Table 1, the study group is made up of 30 school administrators from Istanbul province. Of the participants, 6 hold office as the administrator at a preschool education institution (20%), 8 at a primary school (26.6%), 8 at an elementary school (26.6%), and 8 at a high school (26.6%). Women (n=15) and men (n=15) constituted half of the participants each. Of the participants, 10 (33.3%) have 3-10 years of managerial experience, 14 (46.7%) 11-20 years, 6 (20%) 21 years and more. The participants have been coded from 1 to 30.

### **Data Collection**

Before starting the data collection process, a pilot study was conducted with four teachers, one from each education level, outside the study group, in order to critically examine the interview questions to be used in data collection and to notice and correct the problems that may occur during the interview process. In this process, the researcher took notes on the interview questions and the data collection process, and the data collection method and process were finalized by discussing these notes with the field expert. At the end of this process, the structured interview form was transformed into a semi-structured form. The reason for this is that the teachers want to express their thoughts toward the decision-making phenomenon. This decision was taken with the thought that the structured form would draw a limiting framework for teachers to express themselves.

Interviews were used to collect data for this study. The interview form was peer-reviewed by two experts and was modified in accordance with their recommendations. The form then was finalized by way of pilot interviews made with 3 participants. In the interviews, semi-structured interview forms drafted by the researchers were employed. Before the interviews, the participants were informed of the purpose and the process of the study. The participants were assured that their personal information would not be shared with third parties, they were free to leave the interview any time they want, and all the records would be destroyed and not be included in the study. Each interview took about 20 to 45

minutes. Upon data collection, the audio records of interviews were transcribed and the analysis process was initiated.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Several strategies have been employed in order to improve the validity and reliability of the study. The first of these; school administrators who work in different types of schools, work in different environments, and have different experiences, backgrounds and characteristics are included in the research. The second strategy is peer review. The researcher communicated all processes involved in the study to a peer with expertise in qualitative research and made revisions based on the assessments made in cooperation with the expert. The third strategy is the purposive sampling method. Qualitative studies are inclined to reveal also specific facts instead of only general facts, making the selection of participants in a way to ensure variability of great importance. In this study, participants are designated through the maximum variation method. Moreover, the data was coded by another expert to assure intercoder reliability. Then both codings were compared and the similarity rate was found to be 80%. Corresponding codes were accepted outright. Those on which consensus was failed to be attained were worked on again and then given their final form. According to [Yıldırım and Şimşek \(2013\)](#), 70% similarity is acceptable for intercoder reliability.

### **Analysis of Data**

The collected data was analyzed using the method of content analysis. According to [Yıldırım and Şimşek \(2013\)](#), what is primarily aimed in content analysis is to attain concepts that can explain the data and the relationships among these concepts. The content analysis basically involves collecting similar data under specific concepts and themes and interpreting such data in a way to make sense to readers. As suggested by [Creswell \(2012\)](#), it is aimed to analyze the data in a way that will produce answers to the research questions in the coding of the data. The aim here is to provide an in-depth understanding of the main phenomenon through themes.

After the data were collected, all the audio recordings were first written down by the researcher. Afterwards, all interview documents were read three times and tried to become familiar with the content of the texts. After reading the texts, a simple coding method was used first. The focus of this coding process is the research questions themselves. The first coding process was completed by reading the entire interview text, and then the interview texts were started to be read again. The purpose of this is to find the codes that have been overlooked and to learn more about the text. After these two readings, the first codes emerged. Then, all the codes obtained by the researcher were written in an Excel file and meaningful categories were tried to be obtained from these codes. In the creation of the categories, both the research questions and the integrity of the codes were taken into consideration. After the researcher finished the coding process, all themes and categories were reviewed. Then, the researcher sent the interview data to an expert in the field of qualitative research methods and educational administration and informed him in detail about all the stages of the research. The interview texts were coded by the expert and the compatibility between the two codings was checked. The reliability between the two coders was found to be 80%. In order to reach a consensus on the themes and categories that were coded differently by the two coders, the researcher and the expert came together and held a meeting for the themes and categories that could not be agreed, and a consensus was reached by discussing these themes and categories. After the agreed coding, the descriptive statistics about the codes were determined by the researcher by counting method. The purpose of doing this is to provide additional and supporting data only to the concepts identified by the qualitative analysis, as stated by [Yıldırım and Şimşek \(2013\)](#). In the analysis of the data, in accordance with the nature of the qualitative research, the in-depth description of the phenomenon was determined as the focal point, and it was not aimed to move away from the main purpose of qualitative research by reducing the qualitative data to quantitative data. Numerical expressions only aim to enrich the perceptions that will occur in the minds of the readers.

## FINDINGS

As a result of the analysis of the data with content analysis, seven categories and seventeen themes were reached. The categories and themes reached regarding the decision-making process in educational organizations are given in Figure-1. According to Figure-1, participative decision making, teacher's willingness, teacher's reluctance, decision-making environment, teacher involvement, administrator mistakes, administrator duties, individuals and situations are the categories obtained as a result of the analysis of the data. In this section, the findings are presented separately within the framework of the categories, the themes and codes that make up the categories are given, and the findings are supported by direct quotations.

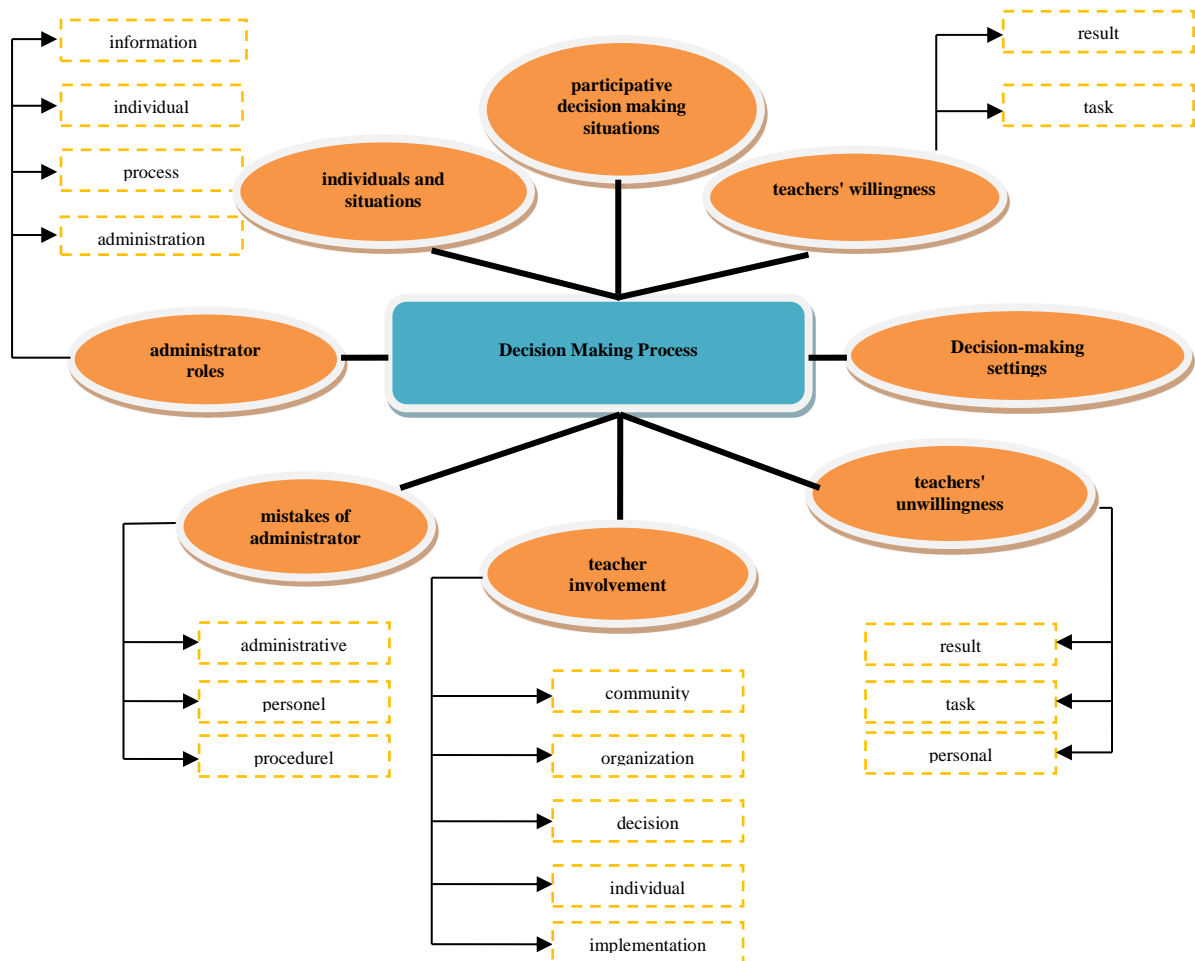


Figure 1. Categories and Themes for Decision Making Process

### 1. Views of School Administrators on the Decision Making Process

In line with the first research question of the study, three themes were reached in line with the opinions of school administrators on the decision-making process. These are the themes of "individuals and situations in decision making", "participative decision making", and "decision making settings". Findings are presented in the tables below. Table 2 shows findings on the theme of participants in the decision-making process. There are five views on the decision-making process.

Table 2. Individuals and situations in the decision-making process

Theme	Code	f
<b>Individuals and situations in decision making</b>	Teachers are included in the process for all decisions to be made at school and decisions are made together	10
	Teachers are included in the process for matters that concern them and decisions are made together	10
	When necessary, other stakeholders are also included in the process	7
	Teachers are asked for their opinion but the final decision is made by the school administrators	2
	Teachers are asked for their opinion but the final decision is made by the school principal	2



When Table-2 is examined, most school administrators are of the opinion that they include teachers in every decision-making process and decisions are made together. Some school administrators stated that they involved teachers in decision-making about the matters that concern them and they act together, whereas others said students, parents, and other stakeholders participate in the process. Some school administrators, on the other hand, stated that they just ask teachers for their opinion, but the final decision is made by the school administration made up of the administrator and the assistant principal. A small proportion of school administrators expressed that the final decision is solely made by the school administrator in the decision-making process however, teachers are asked for their opinion. This shows that school administrators use different methods for the decision-making process. In some cases, decisions are made with an authoritarian approach, while in some cases, a participative decision-making approach is preferred.

One of the administrators explained the involvement of teachers and other individuals in the decision-making process as follows: *"We hold meetings both with parent-teacher association board and other fellows. We conduct brainstorming. We discuss advantages and disadvantages and then come to a decision on the spot. I ask everyone for their opinion, be it is about procurement, enrolling students, a renovation or buying toys for classes."* (K-3)

**Table 3.** Participative decision-making situations

Theme	Code	f
<b>Participative decision-making</b>	Participative decision-making on the matters concerning teachers	13
	Participative decision-making on matters not contradictory to the legislation	8
	Participative decision-making on all matters to contribute to education	5
	Participative decision-making on non-urgent matters	3
	Participative decision-making for matters not related to a higher authority	3
	Participative decision-making on routine matters	3

As shown in Table-3, according to some school administrators, participative decisions are in question when there are matters concerning teachers. In addition to these, decisions are made jointly with teachers in cases that are not contradicting the legislation, for the matters that will contribute to the education, in non-urgent situations, for matters not related to a higher authority, and no limitations are imposed in terms of decision-making, and for the matters about purchases to be made by the school or about routine tasks. An important part of the school administrators' opinions prefers the way of making common decisions on issues that concern teachers. K-16 stated that they make participative decisions only on the matters that concern teachers. However, when matters concerning the administration are the case, teachers are excluded from the process. *"I usually make decisions together with the administrators on the matters that concern the school administration but are of little concern for teachers. I ask for their opinion if the matter interests teachers and the decision is to be implemented by them."* (K-16)

Legal regulations are considered into account in the decisions taken regarding education, and decision processes that may be contrary to the legislation are not entered into. The participation of teachers in this process in the education process can facilitate the implementation of the decisions taken. The teacher's position as a decision maker and his approval of the decision can be a driving force in the implementation of the decisions taken by the teachers. However, some of the school administrators stated that the participative decision-making process may be on issues that do not require urgency. Because it is time-consuming to bring teachers together, to reflect on the decision and to reach a consensus on decisions that need to be taken in emergencies. Some decisions are taken directly by the top management. Schools are only the implementers of these decisions. In such matters, the decision-making process is not re-entered. The views of some of the school administrators are that participative decision making is valid in routine situations. This shows that in extraordinary situations, the participative decision-making process is avoided in the face of unexpected developments.

**Table 4.** Decision-making settings

Theme	Code	f
Decision-making settings	Teachers' council	11
	Commissions	8
	Group meetings	8
	Pop-up meetings	6
	Technological platforms	6
	Clubs	3
	Teams	3

As shown in Table-4, according to the school administrators, the decisions are made through teachers' councils, commissions established based on the decisions, teacher group meetings, pop-up meetings held when needed, technology platforms including online surveys, etc., and forming clubs, and teams. This means that decision-making environments differ and vary. The meetings of teachers committee are conventions that are routinely held at certain periods under the leadership the school administrator with the participation of assistant directors and teachers. In these meetings, subjects related to educational activities are evaluated. In these meetings, the plans for the implementation of educational activities throughout the semester are discussed. Teachers' board meetings constitute one of the decision environments to be taken in educational institutions. The meetings of the branch teachers' board are the meetings held between the teachers who teach in the same branch. In these meetings, plans are made for the applications to be made throughout the term and ideas are exchanged among the teachers. Another decision-making environment expressed by school administrators is instant meetings. These meetings are the meetings that arise about educational activities and have time to solve them. With the development of technology, it is possible to go beyond the standard decision-making environments and make decisions with electronic surveys, online interviews and similar methods. Clubs and teams, on the other hand, refer to small working groups where decisions to be made regarding a specific application, project, activity and field of activity are made.

K-10 expressed that in some cases, decisions are made by way of commissions. "For example, when students enroll in first grade, upon their registration, we establish a commission with teachers who are going to teach them and relevant assistant principals. We consider the number of girls and boys and their other characteristics in classroom planning. We try to do all of this through the commission." (K-10).

## **2. Opinions of School Administrators on Teachers' Participation in the Decision-Making Process**

In line with the second research question of the study, the opinions of school administrators on the participation of teachers in the decision-making process were grouped under three categories. These; "reasons for including teachers in the decision-making process", "teachers' willingness", and the third is "teachers' reluctance". Findings related to these categories are presented in tables.

As shown in Table-5, opinions on the reasons why school administrators include teachers in decision-making processes can be grouped under five themes: community-oriented, organizational-oriented, decision-oriented, individual-oriented and implementation-oriented. The first of the reasons for including teachers in the decision-making process; to create a community spirit among decision makers and to ensure that individuals are integrated as a family. Second, there are factors that benefit the institution. These factors are to create a corporate culture, to support democracy in the organization and to ensure its implementation, to ensure a healthy development of the educational environment, to support the formation of new ideas by including teachers in the decision-making process at school, and to enable the development of new practices and processes. In addition to these, it was stated as a reason to increase the working efficiency of teachers and to take healthier and more applicable decisions in favor of the institution by including teachers in the decisions taken. The third factor is about the decisions taken. By including the teachers in the participative decision-making process, different ideas and teachers' experiences are benefited from, mixed issues are understood with consensus, and the participants in the decision-making process are enabled to implement the decisions taken. However, some of the school administrators stated that when a decision is taken, if a problem arises, they enter the process of participative decision making so that there are people who will take responsibility for it. The fourth factor is aimed at individuals who will participate in the decision-making process. School

administrators stated that they value teachers by including them in the decision-making process, that no one is excluded, that they make teachers happy and that they try to increase their motivation in this way. The fifth factor in involving teachers in the participative decision-making process is related to the implementation phase of the decisions taken. School administrators stated that by including teachers in the decision-making process, they increase the applicability of the decisions taken, make teachers share in the responsibility of the decisions taken, minimize the risks and thus reduce their own burden.

**Table 5.** Reasons for including teachers in decision making

Category	Theme	Code	f
Reasons why school administrators involve teachers in the decision-making process	Community-oriented	To create a community spirit	5
		To become a family	3
		To improve the sense of belonging	3
	Organization-oriented	To create an organizational culture	3
		To create a democratic environment within the organization	3
		To create a healthy education environment	3
		To promote novelties	3
		To allow for a more successful educational process	3
		To improve efficiency	3
		To be able to make decisions in favor of the organization	3
	Decision-oriented	To consider different ideas	22
		To benefit from teachers' experiences	8
		To be able to find someone accountable when problems arise	3
		To make sense of complex matters	3
	Individual-oriented	To make sure the decision is implemented	3
		To value individuals	5
		To ensure no one is excluded	5
	Implementation-oriented	To ensure teachers' happiness	3
		To improve motivation	3
		To prevent future problems	5
		To share responsibility with teachers	5
		To minimize risks	3
		To ease the burden on the administrator	3

One of the most important factors in involving teachers in the decision-making process is to include different ideas in the decision-making process by making use of teachers' experiences. K-18 expressed this situation as follows: "We have to promote their participation in the process. Because teachers work on the field. They see what we don't on certain matters." (K-18)

**Table 6.** Cases where teachers are unwilling to participate in the decision-making process

Category	Theme	Code	f
Unwillingness situations	Due to the results	Unwillingness to participate in a decision-making process that means extra workload	19
		Unwillingness when one experienced that the prior decisions led to nowhere	3
		Unwillingness when the decision to be made feels like it will result in restrictions	3
		Unwillingness when the accountability for the implementation of the decision is shared	3
	Due to the task	Unwillingness in the decision-making process for the assignment of obligatory tasks	6
		Unwillingness in the decision-making process for matters other than educational activities	6
	Due to personel reasons	Unwillingness caused by individuals' mindset	3
		Unwillingness when teachers feel worthless	3
		Unwillingness when teachers are not unsupported	3
		Unwillingness among old-aged teachers	3
		Unwillingness if it feels like the decision will fail to improve motivation	3
		Unwillingness when there is no reward at the end of the decision-making process	3
		Unwillingness when the teachers' workload is already heavy	3

As shown in Table-6, teachers' unwillingness toward the decision-making process falls under three themes: due to the results, due to the task, and due to personal reasons. The theme of "result-oriented" is about the effects of the results of the decisions taken on teachers. A significant part of school administrators stated that teachers are not willing to participate in a decision-making process when the decision to be made means extra workload. According to school administrators, when teachers feel that the decision that is to be made will cause extra workload in the implementation they are reluctant to get involved in the decision-making process. Teachers may perceive activities that are outside the scope of

their duties such as projects, ceremonies, etc. as a burden and thus be loath to take part in the decision-making process concerning such matters. According to K-21 and K-12, "Teachers are not open to projects and novelties." (K-21). "Some projects take 2 or 3 years. They don't want to get involved in the decision-making process for such projects." (K-12).

The second theme is "task-oriented". School administrators state that teachers are reluctant to participate in the decision-making process when it is required to be fulfilled as a standard in education-teaching activities and task sharing is mandatory. In addition, teachers want to stay away from this process in matters that are outside of direct educational activities. The third theme is "individual-oriented". According to the opinions of school administrators, one of the reasons for teachers' reluctance to participate in the decision-making process is the factors arising from individuals. According to school administrators, this may be due to teachers' mentality, teachers' feeling unhappy in the institution, the fact that teachers are older, situations that do not motivate teachers at the end of the decision process, or the lack of motivating factors such as rewards and similar things that teachers will be pleased with after the decision process. In addition, according to school administrators, if teachers feel that there will be an extra workload for them in the decision process, they are reluctant to participate in this process.

**Table 7.** Situations Where Teachers Are Willing To Participate In The Decision-Making Process

Category	Theme	Code	f
Willingness situations	Due to the results	Willingness when the decision is directly concerns one's interests	14
		Willingness in a decision-making process in which the responsibility is shared with more individuals	3
		Willingness if the teacher is given the chance to show their abilities	3
		Willingness when the decision will motivate the teacher	3
		Willingness if there is a reward at the end of the process	8
	Due to the task	Willingness among those who love the profession	3
		Willingness for decisions concerning teachers' own branches	3

As shown in Table-7 situations, where teachers are willing to participate in the decision-making process, are grouped under two themes: due to the results and due to the task. According to the opinions of the school administrators, the wishes of the teachers towards the decision-making process are directly related to the decision taken at the end of the decision process. If the teachers are satisfied with the decision and gain a benefit from the result of the decision, it is easier for the teachers to participate in this process. Another factor is related to the individual's perspective on his profession. If the teachers love their profession and the decision is in their area of interest, then they want to be involved in this process. School administrators are predominantly of the opinion that teachers want to get involved more in decision-making if their personal interests are at stake. K-1 stated that teachers are willing to take part in the decision-making processes concerning their employee rights. "In general, teachers are more than willing to have a stake in decisions that concern their employee rights." (K-1)

### **3. School Administrators' Views on the Roles of School Administrators in the Decision-Making Process**

In line with the third research question of the study, the opinions of the participants on the roles of school administrators in the decision-making process were grouped under two categories. These categories are "administrators mistakes for decision making" and "roles of administrators in the decision making process". Findings related to these categories are presented in tables.

As shown in Table-8, mistakes made by school administrators fall under three themes based on the opinions of school administrators: administrative, personal, and procedural. According to the opinions of the participants, the mistakes made by the managers in the decision-making process stem from their understanding of management. The administrators' authoritarian management style, only guidance at school, not sharing the information with others, constantly avoiding risk, not knowing where the authority of the administrators begins and ends, and constantly criticizing the wrong decisions taken are the mistakes arising from the management understanding of the administrators. Another factor that affects school administrators' ability to effectively manage the decision-making process is the personalities of the administrators. Thinking that the teachers in the school are ignorant and that only

he is knowledgeable is one of them. It is the mistakes made by the administrators that the administrators are oppressive, do not criticize themselves, be strict about the rules, do not want different ideas to emerge, and discriminate among the teachers. In addition to the management approach and personality of school administrators, the way in which decisions are made is one of the factors affecting this process. The administrators decide alone or want to make decisions with their assistants without involving the teachers in the process, insist on taking decisions against the law, make decisions without thinking and consulting others, see only their own perceptions as valuable, and try to make decisions without evaluating the results of alternatives in the decision process are the formal mistakes of managers in the decision-making process.

**Table 8.** Mistakes made by the administrators in decision-making processes

Category	Theme	Code	f
Mistakes of administrators in decision-making	Administrative	Autocratic management style	12
		Provision of only counseling at school	3
		Not sharing information	3
		Not taking initiatives	3
		Avoiding risks	3
		Not knowing the limits of one's authority	3
		Constantly criticizing wrong decision	3
	Personal	Thinking others are ignorant	9
		Failing to make self-evaluation	3
		Having strict rules	3
		Resisting to different ideas	3
		Discriminating among teachers	3
		Acting impulsively	3
	Procedural	Having an oppressive personality	3
		Deciding on one's own	24
		Deciding only with assistant principals	3
		Making decisions contradicting the legislation	3
		Making harmful and unimplementable decisions	3
	Making decisions without thinking	3	
	Making decisions by only relying on personal experience	3	
	Making decisions without considering the possible outcomes of the decision	3	

On the accounts of school administrators, their most common mistakes in decision-making are deciding alone, adopting an autocratic management style, and believing that everyone is ignorant and not qualified enough to make a decision. K-14 stated that school administrators do not know the limits to their authority, unaware of how the decisions will affect whom, and maintain an authoritarian attitude. "Our friends don't know how to exercise their powers as a school administrator. They are not aware of where they push the boundaries of their authority. Since they don't anticipate who will get hurt when exercising their powers, some principals just say I'll do that, I'll implement this when they make a decision." (K-26)

As shown in Table-9, four themes emerged based on the participants' opinions about the roles school administrators play in the decision-making process: information, individual, process, and administration. According to the opinions of the participants, school administrators should be able to manage information in the decision-making process, collect information, share the information with others, and use technology actively. The second of the duties of the administrators in the decision-making process is gathered under the theme of the individual. Administrators should have the ability to empathize with others, be transparent and flexible in the decision-making process, and benefit from their experiences. It should be also taken into account the views, opinions and perspectives of all individuals in the school. According to the opinions of the participants, administrators should also tolerate the mistakes that may occur during or after the decision-making process. One of the roles of administrators in the decision-making process is towards the process itself. In this process, administrators have the roles of encouraging participative decision making, supporting individuals, providing coordination in the process, controlling the decisions taken and recording the whole decision process in writing. The last theme is "administration oriented". According to the opinions of the participants, the management style and perspective of school administrators are an important factor in

the decision-making process. School administrators should manage the process by gaining the trust of individuals and guiding them, taking initiative in the decision process. When the opinions of the participants in Table-9 are examined, a significant part of the duties of the managers in the decision-making process are gathered under the theme of "administration". Therefore, the importance of management style and organization in the decision-making process was emphasized by school administrators.

**Table 9.** Administrators' roles in decision-making

Category	Theme	Code	f
Administrators' roles in decision-making	Information oriented	Keeping open the communicational channels	9
		Approving information together	3
		Distributing information	3
		Active use of technology	3
		Collecting information	3
	Individual oriented	Empathy	6
		Transparency	3
		Flexibility	3
		Making use of experiences	3
		Considering different perspectives	3
		Show tolerance toward mistakes	3
	Process oriented	Supporting participative decision-making	18
		Supporting individuals in the decision-making process	6
		Facilitating coordination in the decision-making process	3
		Supervising the decisions that have been made	3
		Recording decisions in writing	3
	Administration oriented	Gaining people's trust	6
		Supporting community spirit	3
		Guiding	3
		Adopting a democratic management style	3
		Making efforts to ensure that the decisions have a positive outcome	3
		Becoming a leader	3
		Being aware of the limits to one's authority	3
		Knowing the school climate	3
		Being aware of the institution's weaknesses and strengths	3
		Not giving up on decisions that will benefit the education although it will be a burden on the teacher	3
		Motivating individuals	3
Taking the legislation into consideration		3	
Taking initiatives		3	
Thinking and acting in line with the goals of education		3	
Being able to manage the decision-making process		3	

School administrators predominantly mentioned the following codes: supporting decision-making together, keeping communication channels open, empathize, supporting individuals in the decision-making process, and gaining people's trust. According to K-30, those who are going to be affected by the decisions and those who are going to implement the decisions need to be involved in the process and asked for their opinion. In addition, the implementation stages of the decision-making process should also be observed. "Those who are going to implement the decisions should definitely sit at the table. Those who will implement the decisions will also be impacted by the decisions. So, they should be involved in the process. In addition, implementation stages need to be paid attention to."

## CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research is to determine the school administrators for making participative decisions in the decision-making process, which is an important part of the organizations. According to the results of the research, decision-making process in educational institutions differ. Some of them are inclined to involve teachers in the process in all decisions to be made, but some of them do so only when it is necessary. On the other hand, some school administrators just ask teachers for their opinion

and regard them as sources of ideas and never let them to have a say in the final decision. However, most of the school administrators maintain that teachers should be allowed to have a direct say in the decision. In this regard, the results of the study are in line with the studies carried out by [Dönmez, Uğurlu and Cömert \(2011\)](#), [Güçlü et al., \(2015\)](#), [Sezer \(2016\)](#), [Üzüm and Kurt \(2019\)](#). In addition, this finding is similar to the decision-making structure put forward by [Hoy and Tarter \(2003\)](#).

Another result of the study is that there are various cases in which decisions are made jointly. The participative decision-making process at school represents six different topics: matters concerning the teacher, matters not contradicting the legislation, all matters to contribute to education, non-urgent situations, decisions not involving a higher authority, and routine affairs. At this point, the situation school administrators highlighted the most is that the matters concerning teachers require participative decisions. Such matters may include those that concern teachers' extra hours, employee rights, hall monitor schedules, course load, extracurricular courses, and so on. In urgent situations, school administrators do not resort to participative decision-making processes, which means that in such cases school administrators make decisions either on their own or with the assistant principals. [DeMatthews \(2014\)](#) believes that none of the decisions should be made solely by the manager. However, there may be occasions requiring managers to make decisions alone without including their subordinates in the process.

According to another result of the research, decision-making environments in schools are teacher council meetings, commissions, teacher group board meetings, pop-up meetings, technological environments such as online surveys, clubs, and teams. However, the majority of decisions are made by way of teachers' councils, commissions, and teacher group meetings. This result shows that various settings are used for decision-making processes. Decisions are taken in environments such as board meetings attended by all teachers and administrators, as well as in the group teachers' board, where only teachers participate. Therefore, the decision-making process in educational institutions shows flexibility. This flexibility shows that teachers have a say in administration and can make decisions about their own practices.

Another result of the study reveals that school administrators involve teachers in decision-making processes due to several reasons, which agrees with the findings of the study carried out by [Babaoğlan and Yılmaz \(2012\)](#). Two reasons school administrators predominantly mentioned are to consider different ideas and to make use of teachers' experiences. Teachers' inclusion in the decision-making process allows them to express their ideas. This allows for different ideas on the alternatives and a critical analysis of the alternatives. In addition, different teachers have different experiences, and this variety allows for considering the alternatives from different perspectives. In this process, as many different ideas as possible are produced and each one is evaluated. In addition, some school administrators do not depend only on their own experiences and perceptions, but also involve teachers in decision-making.

Allowing teachers to participate in the decision-making process and granting them authority in that regard has several advantages. This authority enables the teachers to develop self-directed teams and these teams to take initiatives in the school ([Cheung & Cheng, 2002](#)). Decisions made by teachers oblige them to implement these decisions ([Wan, 2005](#)). Teachers' involvement in decision-making allows them to share critical information regarding the root causes of the problems regarding schooling thus allowing the emergence of decisions of quality ([Johnson & Boles, 1994](#)).

By promoting the involvement of teachers in decision-making, schools become more democratic organizations and thus turn into places with an active role in the reconstruction of the society, and as a result, social equality is ensured ([Richardson & Placier, 2001](#)). According to [Baloğlu \(2014\)](#), the school principal's leadership gives to school its shape. "School is the school as much as its principal" exemplifies this situation. Participation of teachers in the decision-making process increases the power and influence of the teacher and decreases the power and influence of the principal. As the decisions are made together, the accuracy of the saying "School is the school as much as the power of the teachers." becomes more verified and the school principal's power more visible. According to [Pashardis \(1994\)](#), teachers' active participation in the decision-making process can influence the school's overall success. Teachers need to feel that they can contribute to the school more than teach independently in their

classrooms. Schools must understand that the entire system will benefit when teachers play an active role in controlling the work environment.

The study revealed the views of the administrators regarding the situations in which teachers are willing or unwilling to participate in the decision-making process. Teachers show willingness towards the decision-making process in some situations and unwillingness in others. The most important factor that causes unwillingness in the decision-making process is the decisions that will impose an extra workload on teachers. For instance, starting a project at school, although it is not compulsory, will increase the workload, which causes unwillingness to participate in decision-making. [Eriş et al. \(2017\)](#), [Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis \(2013\)](#) found that teachers were less willing to participate in administrative decisions. This result of the research shows parallelism with [Eriş et al. \(2017\)](#)'s research findings.

The situations in which teachers are willing to get involved in the decision-making process also vary. This finding of the study is similar to the research findings of [Smylie \(1992\)](#). [Smylie \(1992\)](#) revealed that there are differences in the willingness of teachers to participate in the decision according to the decision situation. According to more than half of the school administrators, teachers are more willing to participate in the decision-making process if the outcome of the decision directly concerns the interests of the individual or if the decision promises a material or a non-material reward at the end. This finding of the study is in parallel with the findings of the studies conducted by [Türk and Tulunay Ateş \(2019\)](#), [Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis \(2013\)](#), [Smylie \(1992\)](#).

The results of the study regarding the administrators have two parts: mistakes made by administrators and the roles administrators play in this process. According to the study results, the mistakes made by the administrators in the decision-making process were grouped under the themes of administration, personality, and manner. Based on the accounts of the school administrators, it is seen that there are various mistakes involved in the process; however, the most prominent ones are that administrators decide on their own, they display autocratic administrator attitudes, and they assume other people do not know anything. The fact that school administrators ignore the teachers, students, parents, and the environment and regard themselves as the sole authority will keep them from attaining sound decisions and make the implementation of the decisions difficult. However, asking others for their opinions and including them in the process may allow for new perspectives to emerge and ensure that individuals will play a more active role in the implementation of the decisions to be made and that they will feel valued.

Another result of the study points out that school administrators play crucial roles in the decision-making process. School administrators' guidance, leadership behaviors, awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and ability to take initiative can be given as examples. Decision-making is of great importance for both the organization and the individuals as pointed out by several studies ([Ölçüm, 2015](#); [Sukimo & Siengthai, 2011](#)). Therefore, decision-making at school should be regarded as a factor that directly affects both individuals and the organization. What school administrators highlighted more about the roles of administrators is that administrators should support the participative decision-making process. By encouraging the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process, school administrators will both improve the applicability of decisions and diverge from the autocratic structure. According to [Baloğlu \(2014\)](#), distributive and participative leadership and participative decision-making practices should be relied on rather than one-person leadership practices at school. What school administrators and teachers should know is that involvement in decisions does not mean the transfer of but the sharing of decision-making powers. When the decision-making powers are not shared, the one who is the decision-making authority and who is responsible for the decisions is the administrator ([Bursaloğlu, 2013](#)).

Based on the study results, the following recommendations have been developed: decisions should be made with the participation of teachers, the teachers should have a say in the decision-making process. This will ensure that different ideas on the matter will be proposed and the applicability of the decision will improve as teachers take a part in the decisions. The teacher, who has a say in the decisions, will feel valued and this will improve motivation and have an impact on the effectiveness. When school



administrators make all decisions alone or with their assistants, that will cause teachers to feel excluded, which, as a result, cause them to see school only as a work environment, not as a family.

In addition, making decisions based only on experiences can lead to undesirable results. Individuals and organizations have a dynamic structure, not a static one. A decision that was implemented in the past and yielded positive results may not be as efficient today. For this reason, administrators should consider experiences, but never solely depend on them for entire decision process. Instead of making irrational, intuitive, and emotional decisions, school administrators should create a logical process based on participative decision-making, where different ideas have a voice as much as possible.

School administrators should make an effort to implement the decisions that have been made. Expecting everything to happen by itself is unrealistic. After the decision, those who will put the decision in the action should be encouraged. School administrators should work to implement the decision and set an example for others. Administrators should monitor themselves from a critical perspective and try to identify and correct their mistakes. Decision-making processes that teachers are unwilling to take part in should be analyzed well. The school administrator should gain the trust of the teachers, encourage them to take part in the activities, and reward the teachers for their effort in the implementation of the decision. In addition, school administrators should receive training on the decision-making process and that needs to be repeated periodically. To this end, collaborations with universities may be helpful. The environment and culture of each school display different characteristics. It cannot be expected for the decisions to be made from a center, implemented in institutions with all these different characteristics, and be equally effective and efficient. Thus, it should be considered to grant schools autonomy in decision-making.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research has some limitations. The first of these is that the questions asked by the researcher are limited to the perceptions of the participants in qualitative research as in quantitative research. This is due to the nature of communication. It is not known exactly how the questions asked by the researcher were perceived by the participant. The limitation here is that what the researcher wants to ask may not be what the participant perceives to be the same thing. The limitation of the research is that the participant responds to the questions as he perceives, even if the questions are expressed in a clear and understandable way by the researcher and if necessary, the questions are explained in detail. The second limitation is that it is accepted that the participants answered the questions in a way that reflects the truth. The third limitation is that due to the nature of qualitative studies, direct generalizations cannot be made to previous studies, and therefore the discussion section of the study was made by taking this limitation into account. The fourth is related to the professional seniority of the participants participating in the research. Considering the assumption that school administrators with more professional seniority have more experience and will contribute more to the research, participants with less professional seniority also participated in the research. However, this limitation has been tried to be reduced as much as possible based on the two-year professional seniority criterion.

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## Okul Yöneticilerinin Katılımcı Karar Verme Sürecine Yönelik Algularının İncelenmesi

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### Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, eğitim örgütleri olan okullarda katılımcı karar verme sürecine yönelik okul yöneticilerinin algılarını incelemektir. Araştırmanın yöntemi, nitel araştırma desenlerinden olan temel nitel araştırma desendir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, ölçüt örnekleme ve maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme yöntemleri ile belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu resmi okul öncesi, ilkokul, ortaokul ve liselerde görev yapan 30 okul yöneticisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma verilerinin toplanmasında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır ve veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre karar verme sürecinde yöneticilerin tutumu, değişen durumlara göre farklılaşmaktadır. Öğretmenler bazı durumlarda karar verme sürecine dahil edilirken bazı durumlarda bu sürecin dışında bırakılmaktadır. Kararlar tek bir ortamda alınmamakta, kararların alındığı ortamlar çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine dahil edilmesine neden olan birçok faktör vardır. Bunlardan en çok ifade edileni, farklı fikirlerin değerlendirilmesi gerektiğidir. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine yönelik istekli ve isteksiz olduğu durumlar çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Yönetici görüşlerine göre öğretmenlere fazladan iş yükü doğuracak durumlarda karar verme sürecine katılımda isteksizlik göstermekte ancak bireye menfaat sağlayan durumlarda istekli olmaktadır. Karar verme sürecinde yöneticiler tarafından yapılan birçok hata bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan en çok ifade edileni yöneticilerin tek başına karar verme eğilimidir. Okul yöneticilerinden karar verme sürecinde beklenen bazı roller bulunmaktadır. Buna yönelik katılımcılar tarafından en fazla ifade edilen kod, yöneticilerin katılımcı karar alma sürecini desteklemeleri gerektiğidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitim, Eğitim yönetimi, Okul yöneticileri, Karar verme, Katılımcı karar verme.



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## Genişletilmiş Özet

**Problem:** Karar verme; çeşitli amaçlar, amaçlara ulaştıracak yollar, araçlar ve imkanlar içinden seçim yapmakla ilgili zihinsel, duygusal ve bedensel süreçlerin toplamıdır (Eren, 2019). Karar, yönetimin kalbi ve diğer süreçlerin eksenidir. Örgütün yaşaması alınan kararların doğruluğuna bağlıdır (Bursalıoğlu, 2013). Karar verme, eğitim yönetiminin en önemli unsurlarından birisi olarak tanımlanmıştır (Davis, 2004). Yapılan araştırmalar okul yöneticilerinin karar vermelerinin genellikle düzenli aralıklarla gerçekleştiğini ve yöneticilerin zamanlarının yaklaşık yarısını 4 dakikadan daha az zaman harcayan faaliyetlere harcadığını göstermektedir (Crowson & Porter-Gehrie, 1980). Başka bir araştırmaya göre ise okul yöneticileri günlük olarak yaklaşık 400 farklı etkileşimde bulunmaktadır (Manasse, 1985). Dolayısıyla tüm bu etkileşimler ve işler yöneticilerin karar vermelerini gerektirmektedir. Bu nedenle birçok farklı görevi yerine getirmek zorunda olan okul yöneticileri için karar verme önemli işlerden birisidir. Beklentilerin yüksek olduğu, katı taleplerin ve hızlı değişimlerin olduğu günümüzde, okul yöneticilerinin karar vermeleri karışık bir süreç haline gelmiştir (Shaked & Schechter, 2019). Karar verme sürecinde kararların kimler tarafından alınacağı önem taşımaktadır. Kararlar tek bir kişi tarafından alınabileceği gibi, örgüt içindeki belirli gruplar tarafından veya örgütün tümü tarafından da alınabilir (March & Simon, 1958). Karar verme süreci diğer örgütlerde olduğu gibi eğitim örgütlerinde de önemli konuların başında gelmektedir. Eğitim kurumları; yönetici, öğretmen, öğrenci, veli ve paydaşlar gibi birçok grubu bünyesinde barındıran ve çevrelerinden doğrudan etkilenen ve onları etkileyen örgütlerdir. Bu nedenle eğitim örgütlerinde kararların kimler tarafından alındığı, kimler tarafından alınması gerektiği, alınan kararların sonuçları, öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine katılıp katılmamasına yönelik konular tartışılmaktadır. Literatürde bazı araştırmalar ise katılımcı karar vermenin sonuçlarına yönelik çalışmaları içermektedir. Yapılan araştırmalarda yöneticilerin öğretmenlere ortak karar verme fırsatı sağlayarak okulları güçlendirdikleri (Balyer vd., 2017), öğretmenlerin yeterli duygusunu ve iş doyumunu artırdığı (Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013), örgüt performansını (Ceballos López vd., 2019; Daryadi vd., 2018; Wadesango, 2012) ve öğrenci performansını artırdığı (Ceballos López vd., 2019; Wadesango, 2012) sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine katılımını engelleyen faktörün ise eğitim sisteminin yüksek merkezileşme özelliği göstermesi olarak gösterilmiştir (Hammad, 2010). Yapılan bu araştırmaların ortak karar vermenin sonuçlarına odaklandığı görülmektedir. Ayrıca araştırmaların birçoğunun nicel bağlamda incelendiği (Ceballos López vd., 2019; Daryadi, vd., 2018; Eriş vd., 2017; Güçlü vd., 2015; Mager & Nowak, 2012; Smylie, 1992; Üzüm & Kurt, 2019) görülmektedir. Literatürdeki bazı araştırmalar ise yalnızca bir okul kademesindeki katılımcılar ile gerçekleştirilmiştir (Babaoğlan & Yılmaz, 2012; Can & Serençelik, 2017; Ceballos López vd., 2019). Dolayısıyla okul yöneticilerinin araştırmanın katılımcısı olduğu ve yöneticilerin görüşlerine odaklanan nitel çalışmaların oldukça sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca literatürde farklı eğitim kademelerinde çalışan okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerinin bütüncül bir yaklaşımla ele alındığı çalışmaların da sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, eğitim kurumlarında ortak karar verme sürecine yönelik okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerinin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Bu amaca yönelik olarak aşağıdaki üç temel soruya cevap aranacaktır.

- Okul yöneticilerine göre okullarda karar verme süreci nasıl işlemektedir?
- Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine katılımı konusunda okul yöneticileri ne düşünmektedir?
- Karar verme sürecinde okul yöneticisinden beklenen roller nelerdir?

**Yöntem:** Bu araştırmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden biri olan temel nitel araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Merriam (2009), temel nitel araştırma çalışmasını, insanların deneyimlerini ne şekilde yorumladıkları, kendi deneyimlerini nasıl oluşturdukları ve deneyimlerine yükledikleri anlamı keşfetme ile ilgilenen araştırmacılar tarafından kullanılan bir desen olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunun belirlenmesinde nitel araştırmaların doğasına uygun olan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitlilik ve ölçüt örnekleme yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri okul öncesi, ilköğretim ve liselerde görev yapan 30 okul yöneticisinden görüşme yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Toplanan verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Creswell (2012) tarafından önerildiği gibi verilerin kodlanmasında araştırma sorularına cevap üretecek şekilde verilerin analiz edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Burada amaç, temalar yoluyla ana olgunun derinlemesine anlaşılmasını sağlamaktır. Bu araştırmanın geçerlik ve güvenilirliğini artırmak için kullanılan stratejiler; farklı okul türlerinde görev yapan, farklı ortamlarda çalışan, farklı deneyim, geçmiş ve özelliklere sahip okul yöneticilerinin araştırmaya dahil

edilmesi, araştırma süreci ve sonuçlarının uzman incelemesinden geçmesi, kodlama güvenilirliğinin tespit edilmesidir.

**Bulgular:** İçerik analizi sonucunda ortak karar verme, öğretmen istekliliği, öğretmen isteksizliği, karar verme ortamı, öğretmen katılımı, yönetici hataları, yönetici görevleri, bireyler ve durumlar olmak üzere sekiz kategoriye ulaşılmıştır. Okul yöneticilerinin önemli bir çoğunluğuna göre okul yöneticileri okulda alınabilecek tüm kararlara öğretmenleri dahil etmektedir ve kararlar ortak alınmaktadır. Okul yöneticilerinin ortak karar verme sürecine yönelik görüşleri farklılaşmaktadır. Okul yöneticileri öğretmeni ilgilendiren konularda, mevzuata aykırı olmayan durumlarda, eğitime katkı sağlayacak tüm konularda, aciliyeti olmayan durumlarda, üst yapıdan gelmeyen kararlarda, rutin durumlarda ortak karar verme sürecine girmektedir. Ortak karar verme ortamları da farklılaşmaktadır. Kararlar öğretmenler kurulu, komisyonlar, zümre kurulları gibi farklı ortamlarda alınmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine dahil edilme sebepleri topluluğa yönelik, kuruma yönelik, karara yönelik, bireye yönelik, uygulamaya yönelik olmak üzere beş temaya ayrılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin bu sürece dahil edilmesinin en çok ifade edilen sebebi karar verme sürecinde farklı fikirlerin değerlendirilmesi ihtiyacıdır. Karar verme sürecinde öğretmenlerin isteksiz olduğu durumlar sonuca yönelik, göreve yönelik ve bireye yönelik temaları altında toplanmıştır. Yönetici görüşlerinden en fazla ifade edilen kod, öğretmenlerin kendilerine fazladan iş yükü doğuracak karar verme sürecine katılımda isteksiz olduklarıdır. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine katılımda istekli olduğu durumlar ise sonuca yönelik ve göreve yönelik temaları altında toplanmıştır. En çok ifade edilen görüş ise öğretmenlerin doğrudan kendi menfaatlerini ilgilendiren karar verme konularında sürece katılımlarında istekli olduklarıdır. Araştırmanın bir başka sonucuna göre karar verme sürecinde yöneticiler tarafından birçok hata yapılmaktadır. Bu görüşler yönetim, kişilik ve biçim temaları altında toplanmıştır. Katılımcıların görüşlerine göre yöneticiler tarafından karar verme sürecinde yapılan ve en çok ifade edilen görüş yöneticilerin tek başına karar vermeleridir. Bu süreçte yöneticilere düşen görevler ise bilgiye yönelik, bireye yönelik, sürece ve yönetime yönelik temaları altında toplanmıştır. Katılımcılar tarafından yöneticilerin karar verme sürecinde yapmaları gereken ve en çok ifade edilen görüş ortak karar verme sürecini destekleyici rol oynamalarıdır.

**Sonuçlar:** Araştırmanın sonucuna göre eğitim kurumlarında karar verme süreci farklılık göstermektedir. Bazı yöneticiler tüm kararlarda öğretmenleri bu sürece dahil etme eğiliminde iken, bazı yöneticiler ise yalnızca gerekli durumlarda öğretmenleri bu sürece dahil etmektedir. Bazı okul yöneticileri ise yalnızca öğretmenlerin fikirlerini almakta ve onları yalnızca fikir üreticileri olarak görmekte, öğretmenlere karara son halinin verilmesinde söz hakkı tanımamaktadır. Ancak okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerinin çoğunluğu öğretmenlere karar üzerinde doğrudan söz hakkı tanınması yönündedir. Araştırmanın diğer bir sonucuna göre ortak karar vermenin meydana geldiği durumlar değişiklik göstermektedir. Kararlar, tüm öğretmenlerin ve yöneticilerin katıldığı kurul toplantıları gibi ortamlarda alınmasının yanında, yalnızca öğretmenlerin katıldığı zümre öğretmenler kurulunda da alınmaktadır. Dolayısıyla eğitim kurumlarında karar verme süreci esneklik göstermektedir. Bu esneklik ise öğretmenlerin yönetimde söz sahibi olduğunun, kendi uygulamaları konusunda kararlar alabildiğini göstermektedir. Araştırmanın diğer bir sonucuna göre okul yöneticilerinin öğretmenleri karar verme sürecine dahil etmeleri birçok nedene bağlıdır. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecine dahil edilmeleri, onların fikirlerini ifade etmelerini sağlamaktadır. Bu durum, alternatifler üzerinde farklı fikirlerin ortaya çıkmasını sağlamakta ve alternatifler eleştirel bir yönle analiz edilmektedir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin her birinin deneyimi oldukça farklıdır. Bu farklılık alternatiflere çeşitli bakış açılarından bakılmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu süreçte olabildiğinde farklı sayıda fikir üretilerek, bu fikirlerin her biri değerlendirmeye alınmaktadır. Ayrıca okul yöneticilerinin bir kısmı yalnızca kendi deneyimlerine ve düşüncelerine göre karar vermemekte, öğretmenleri de bu sürece dahil etmektedir. Araştırmanın diğer bir sonucuna göre öğretmenler bazı durumlarda karar verme sürecine karşı istekli, bazı durumlarda ise isteksiz davranış göstermektedir. Karar verme sürecinde öğretmenlerde isteksizliğe neden olan en önemli etken, öğretmenlere fazladan iş yükü doğuracak kararların alınmasına ilişkindir. Öğretmenlerin karar verme sürecinde istekli olduğu durumlar da çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerine göre yöneticilerin bu süreçte yaptıkları hatalar çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Okul yöneticilerinin öğretmenleri, öğrencileri, velileri ve çevreyi görmezden gelerek yalnızca kendisini otorite olarak görmesi, alınacak kararın sağlıklı olmasını engelleyecek ve kararın uygulanması zorlaşacaktır. Diğer bireylerin fikirlerine başvurmak, bu sürece onları dahil etmek, karar verme sürecinde yeni bakış açılarının ortaya çıkarılmasına olanak sağlayabilir, bireylerin alınacak

kararların uygulanmasında daha aktif rol almalarını ve bireylerin kendilerini değerli hissetmelerini sağlayabilir. Araştırmanın diğer bir sonucuna göre karar verme sürecinde okul yöneticilerine önemli görevler düşmektedir. Okul yöneticilerinin rehberlik yapması, lider davranışları sergilemesi, kurumun zayıf ve güçlü yönlerini tanıması, inisiyatif alabilmesi bunlara örnek olarak verilebilir. Karar verme süreci, örgüt için ve birey için oldukça önem taşımaktadır. Araştırmanın yöneticilere düşen görevler kısmında okul yöneticilerinin en çok vurguladığı nokta, yöneticilerin ortak karar verme sürecini desteklemeleri gerektiğidir. Okul yöneticileri karar verme sürecinde öğretmenlerin katılımını teşvik ederek hem kararların uygulanabilirliğinin artmasını sağlayacak hem de otokratik yapıdan uzaklaşacaktır.

**Öneriler:** Araştırmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda şu öneriler geliştirilmiştir: Kararlar okulda öğretmenlerin katılımı ile alınmalı, öğretmenler karar verme sürecinde söz sahibi olmalıdır. Bu sayede hem karar konusuna yönelik farklı fikirler ortaya çıkacak, hem de öğretmenler alınan kararlara ortak olduğu için uygulanabilirliği artacaktır. Kararlarda söz sahibi olan öğretmen, değer gördüğünü hissedecek, bu durum motivasyonu artırarak, verimliliğe etki edecektir. Okul yöneticilerinin tüm kararları tek başına ya da yardımcıları ile alması, öğretmenlerin kendilerini dışlanmış hissetmelerine neden olacaktır. Bu durumda öğretmenler okulu bir aile, kendilerini de bu ailenin üyesi olarak değil, yalnızca bir iş ortamı olarak görmelerine neden olacaktır. Bunun yanında sadece geçmiş deneyimlere bakarak karar vermek de yanlış sonuçlar doğurabilir. Bireyler ve örgütler durağan değil, değişken bir yapıya sahiptir. Geçmişte uygulanan ve olumlu sonuçlar vermiş bir karar bugün için aynı sonuçları vermeyebilir. Bu nedenle yöneticiler, geçmiş deneyimleri göz önünde tutmalı ancak tüm karar sürecini bunun üzerine kurmamalıdır. Okul yöneticileri mantık dışı, sezgisel ve duyguları doğrultusunda karar vermek yerine, mümkün olduğunca farklı fikirlerin söz sahibi olduğu, ortak karar vermeye dayalı, mantıklı bir süreç oluşturmalıdır. Alınan kararların uygulanması yönünde okul yöneticileri çaba göstermelidir. Karar alındıktan sonra her şeyin kendiliğinden meydana geleceğini beklemek yanlıştır. Karardan sonra uygulayıcılar teşvik edilmeli, cesaretlendirilmelidir. Okul yöneticileri kararın uygulanması yönünde çaba göstererek, diğerlerine örnek olmalıdır. Yöneticiler, kendilerini eleştirel bir gözle sorgulamalı, hatalarını teşhis etmeye çalışmalı ve bunları düzeltme yoluna gitmelidir. Öğretmenlerde isteksizlik uyandıran karar verme süreçleri iyi analiz edilmelidir. Okul yöneticisi öğretmenlerin güvenini kazanarak, onları yapılacak faaliyetlere teşvik etmeli, karar sonrası çaba gerektiren uygulamaların yerine getirilmesinden sonra öğretmenleri ödüllendirmelidir. Bunların yanında okul yöneticilerine, karar verme sürecine yönelik eğitimler verilmeli ve bu eğitimler belirli periyodlarla tekrarlanmalıdır. Bu konuda üniversitelerle işbirliğine gidilmelidir. Her okulun bulunduğu çevre, kültür farklı özellikler barındırmaktadır. Kararların tek bir merkezden alınarak, tüm bu farklı özelliklere sahip kurumlarda uygulanabilmesi, aynı derecede etkili ve verimli olması beklenemez. Bu nedenle okulların karar verme özerkliği gözden geçirilmelidir.