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# The Argument in Favor of Strategic Decision Making Based on Data

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***Research Article***

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**Abstract**
The argument for data-driven strategic decision making is examined in this paper. In organizational changes, the efficacy of executing the chosen strategies and the caliber of strategic decision-making are becoming more crucial. This necessitates the use of data-driven decision-making processes in strategy management. Strategic data-driven decision making is gathering data, interpreting it, distributing it to those who need it, using it to boost productivity and enhance performance, and sharing data-driven choices with important stakeholders. The many concepts and components of data-driven strategic decision making are described. The use of data in strategic decision-making in schools is taken into consideration. Data collection, analysis, and implementation into development strategies are made easier by this potent instrument in the education sector. Its superior value is in enabling well-informed decision-making, increasing overall school performance, and improving student success. Any endeavor involving data-driven decision making requires a proactive leader who can advocate for the cause and comprehend the vision. Making strategic decisions is a crucial part of putting a company on a path to long-term success.

**Keywords:** Information, strategic choices, models, performance, quality, instruments, and analysis

## Introduction

Too little research has been done in the area of strategy management on the factors that affect strategic decision-making quality and strategy implementation effectiveness (Mulcaster, W.R. 2009). The financial crisis of 2008–2009 is a recent example that may have been prevented if banks had been better aware of the dangers involved in their investments. Data-driven decision making has become a key component of forward-thinking firms' policies and practices because of the dynamics in strategy management (Eden, 1998). In order to monitor and promote performance and improvement, managers in these kinds of businesses are using both domestic and commercial data-driven decision-making tools and support systems. Implementing numerous strategic data-driven decision-making techniques presents technological, resource, budgetary, and data quality issues. In fact, the hardest obstacles of all may simply getting started. In reaction to the perceived absence of well-informed judgments, data-driven decision making is a relatively new concept that has surfaced in the previous ten to fifteen years (Pfeffer, 1998). Organizations may strive toward continuous improvement, satisfy accountability standards, concentrate efforts, evaluate progress, and foster a sense of community via organizational learning, all of which are advantages of data-driven decision making. High-quality business choices are supported by a strong foundation of high-quality data. Strategic decision-making procedures are better in companies with strong performance trends in profitability, growth, and market reputation (Eisenhardt, 1999). When confronted with a variety of management options related to services, product quality characteristics, compensation, inputs, and distribution,

strategic and operational decisions may increase or decrease corporate costs.

## 1 Data Driven Strategic Decision Making

### *1.1 The Linkages*

Three competing theories were developed by Allison (1969) to explain the actions of the participants in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The rational actor model is consistent with rational and planning viewpoints, which hold that individuals behave logically. As a result, the emphasis throughout the decision-making process is on choosing the best course of action after a thorough examination. According to the organization process paradigm, deeply rooted organizational routines impede rational conduct. Conflicting interests and goals result in processes of political positioning and maneuvering inside the organization, according to bureaucratic politics theories. According to Papadakis, Lioukas, and Chambers (1998), comprehensiveness/rationality, financial reporting, role formalization, hierarchical decentralization, politicization, and problem solving characteristics are the criteria used to make strategic choices. Decision-specific traits, such as perceived traits and objective typologies associated with strategic choices, are connected to the process aspects. Characteristics also depend on management and contextual elements, with an emphasis on the internal business situations and the external corporate environment. The most significant factor influencing the strategic decision-making process is decision-specific features. Decisions with various decision-specific qualities go through distinct stages.

Organizational leaders of today rely heavily on data to help them with decision-making, goal-setting and prioritization, progress tracking, need definition, goal-setting, intervention planning, and progress assessment. Effective organization management is the outcome of analyzing the discrepancies between organizational and performance goals. Operational decision making uses decision trees, which rank choices by gradually removing others (Johnson, 1984). The important criteria—growth, investment, and diversification—that will be included in next developments are identified via the elimination process. The amount of data required for the advancement of sustainable organizations must be sufficiently understood by data-based decision makers. The application of data analysis abilities will be improved by understanding fundamental concepts of measurement and evaluation. Technology is necessary to facilitate the use of data and enthusiastically include stakeholders in the analysis of data's strengths, weaknesses, dangers, and possibilities for long-term organizational growth. It is the responsibility of leaders to instruct employees on the organization's goals, vision, and purpose. The stakeholders are informed about their progress in achieving the mission's goals and objectives via the utilization of available data. The organizational theory literature on learning curves and continuous improvement provides the theoretical foundation of data-driven decision making (Pfeffer, 1998). Data-driven strategic decision making involves gathering relevant data, meaningfully analyzing that data, delivering the data to those who require it, utilizing the data to boost productivity and enhance performance, and sharing data-driven decisions with important stakeholders. Mulcaster's Managing factors framework, which tackles this problem by identifying 11 factors that need to be integrated into the decision-making and strategy execution processes, is one method. Time, competing forces, politics, perception, holistic impacts, contributing value, incentives, learning capacities, opportunity cost, risk, and style are the eleven forces. An alliance or cooperative partnership is a much more desirable choice than an acquisition when competence is taken into account in border choices (Thomson, 1993). There are opportunities to end a strategic partnership if circumstances change, particularly in situations where the market is unpredictable and changing quickly. The decision-making process must be appropriately structured in alliances and cooperative partnerships with foreign businesses in order to quickly take corrective measures as technological and competitive developments occur at an extremely rapid pace. The lowest organizational level

capable of making prompt, competent choices should be given decision-making responsibility (Thomson, 1993). The decision-making and execution process should be guided by the managers or non-managers who are closest to the workplace or shop floor, informed, and skilled in the relevant fields. Effective strategic decision making may be used at the corporate level to explain significant turning moments in strategic decision-making, at the unit level to improvise company strategy, and at the multibusiness level to develop collective strategy and cross-business synergies (Brown, 1998).

Reviewers use pre-designed and piloted forms to independently collect data from all included research. The research design, goals, methodological quality, setting, participants, and results in respect to the review objectives will all be reflected in the extracted data (Khatri & Alvin, 2010). The correctness and completeness of the extracted data are compared. As the data is processed by the extraction, transformation, and loading tool, it is examined for missing, inconsistent, and incorrect entries. Errors are fixed, and conflicts are settled by the review team's consensus or by consulting a third party. Big data refers to collections of data sets that are challenging to handle using manual data management tools and even conventional data processing software because of their size and complexity. According to Couldry & Turrow (2014), the ecology of corrections that unite individuals and groups through information, organization, empathy, and celebration as members of a common social and civic space will be impacted by the integration of big data into personalized marketing and content creation. The dangers will cause the corrective media measures that are necessary for a functioning democracy to be eliminated. The best way to multiplex and prioritize several big data applications that share the same underlying infrastructure is a crucial big data problem (Zhang, Jain, Sarkar & Rupprecht 2014). Because of the resource conflict this causes, the most important applications or subworkloads inside the application must be given precedence.
Research need to be diversified, having a range of theoretical foundations. Comprehensive questionnaire surveys evaluated the degree to which research evidence is used in practice, whereas in-depth interview studies might reveal participants' opinions and experiences about obstacles and enablers to the application of research evidence. Only data from comparable studies will be combined and reported for each review aim individually in the findings section that follows. (Alvin & Khatri, 2010). A narrative overview of the data may be created with accompanying tables. The primary themes found in the aims of the systematic review are used to code and arrange data from individual research. Without abstraction or the creation of new theory, conclusions and interpretations are given in the original authors' own words (Khatri & Alvin, 2010). The research design, methodological quality, samples, and settings accessed are used to explain contradicting results.

The data is stored in data warehouse. Inmon (1996) proposed the classic definition of a data warehouse as a subject oriented, non-volatile, integrated and time variant collection of data in support of management decision. Data warehouse provide historical information about an organization which requires to be analyzed by the decision makers hence it’s necessary to develop them in the context of a strategic business plan. The engineering approaches proposed for goal oriented requirements are based on obtaining the information requirement using traditional techniques and objection of the modeling. The traditional techniques are interviews, formal language, checklists and templates. The goal models are current organization goals, change goals, future business goals and evaluation goals. The historical data are analyzed by the decision makers, converting the data into storage information to support the decision making process (Giorgini et al, 2008). Data warehouse originates from a database which gathers and

stores data from various remote information and heterogeneous sources of information (Al Nasser, 2014). It operates as an information system which is capable of extracting knowledge from the operational data stores of the business (Refer fig 1). Information related to suppliers, customers, markets and financial outcomes are provided. Data warehouse has capabilities to convert data into strategic information, which supports the decision making process at the higher levels of the organization.

Organizational learning is the process by which members of an organization acquire and use information to change and implement action (Pfeffer, 1998). Organizations which have systems where knowledge is distributed across functions and individuals and at the same time embedded in the culture, values, and routines of the organization are undergoing the process of organizational learning. Data can serve as a catalyst to propel organizational learning. Data refer to multiple sources and types of information. Leaders can use data to put into place mechanisms to support individual and collective learning surrounding data. Aspects of what information can be garnered from the data, changes of procedures resulting from it and other data to be collected are a boost. An organization professional status and organizational learning are well supported where the culture enhances the dispersion of data and its sharing. Infact for data to be useful to the organization, there should be a number of teams in place that can facilitate the data-driven processes. Data plays the role of gaining competitive advantage, optimization of resources, cost reduction, value creation, accuracy and accountability and hedging uncertainty (Kavale, 2012)

### 1.2 Strategic Decision Making Models

The manager must select which will be the future strategies of the organization after reviewing the possible strategies. Figure 2 shows the contexts within which decision making can take place within organizations and will have the specific decision models within them. The contexts are individual, group, organization, societal institutions and societal (Comerford, 1985).

*Individual Context*

The decision models focus on structuring or explaining the decision makers thought process. The factors for the individual decision maker are rationality, bounded rationality, incrementalism, intuitive and adaptive approaches. In rational decision making there is the maximizing of net value achievement which has sacrifice in one value is linked to a decision is greater than offset by an increase in the achievement of another value. The steps will involve setting up operational goals with weight inventory values and resources with weights have alternative strategies or solutions, have predicted benefits and costs of each strategy or solution choice. Computation of expected value of each choice and selection of the choice that has an outcome of the highest expected value.

Bounded rationality is based on satisfying and settling for satisfactory scenarios for achieving goals. Satisfactory alternatives are available where there is a presence of a set of criteria that explains minimally satisfactory alternatives and the alternatives meets or exceed all the criteria. The bounded rationality decision model for strategy choice is dependent on set up of comprehensive set of operational goals and identification of priority values and available resources. By consideration of the organizational capabilities a set of action plan choices is formed. The critical costs and benefits of each choice are computed and selection of the choice with the greatest net benefit done.

The continuous trend of building out from the current scenario by step by step and small degree form the basis of the disjointed incremental model. Strategy choice is a process of continuing past strategies with only incremental modifications. Incremental approach is useful when existing strategy is acceptable and the strategy choice is close to the present strategy. Problems and incremental goals will be defined while appraisal of the current situation and estimation of incremental adjustments to be in line with the problems. The consequences of incremental

adjustments are quantified and determined whether they are satisfactory. Implementation of incremental adjustments takes place where the consequences of incremental adjustments are satisfactory.

The intuitive approach is based on the years of management experience and high level of confidence achieved. It will apply in the short term future and involve less forecasting and planning. Adaptive approach is a way to use probability estimates to the strategy selection process. The features are on adoption of changing a strategy in relation to the outlook of existing circumstances. Determine the minimum acceptable values of variable which reflect the threshold to the goals and use them to reject the strategies which do not attain the minimum conditions. Ability to achieve targeted goal value will be useful in ranking strategy choices. Consider probability of attaining each goal for remaining strategies be assessed by the extent of the effects of the environmental occurrences. The products of the feasibility estimate for each goal and its payoff for each remaining strategy choice is determined as the expected value. The strategy with the greatest expected value is selected.

***Group Context***

The decision models are based on groups as the major influence in decisions whereby they are composed of the Group and Elite models. The decision maker is a member of the group and the decision is a function of group interactions. The group model for strategy selection is an approach for balancing the interests of groups. It can apply to public policy balancing internal group influence and external groups interests and interests of coalitions in strategy selection. The Elite model of public policy where Elites shape mass opinion on policy questions can be applied to business strategy selection. Management can be effective Elite where there preferred decisions and strategy selections are implemented.

***Organization Context***

The system model features decision making as a function of a set of inputs which are derived in the organization and externally. System models features the organization decision process as a conversion step of strategy decision inputs into decision outputs. The outcome is a set of outputs when processed by the organization. Strategy is the dependent variable and organizational inputs the independent variables. Allison's organizational process model (II) emphasizes selection of strategy by inter organizational bargaining, goals agreement, expectations informally formulated and the first strategy choice which is an acceptable means towards fulfilling expectations selected. The Allison's model will operate in a political process. The political interplay between the various internal and external coalitions of the organizations leads to the selection of a strategy.

***Institutional Context***

Institutions are the primary factors in influencing strategy selection. Government policies are implemented and enforced after being adopted by a governmental institution. The relationship between business structure and strategy is an institutional scenario. Additionally the relationship between other institutional variables and strategy are also an application of the instructional model.

***Global Context***

Global factors are taken into consideration during the process of strategy formulation. The strategy selection model reflects the conceptual level of variables being considered in the decision process. The decision models determine the particular decision variable. Global influences comes in during strategy formulation on the aspects of structured analysis of competition in global industries. Global industries structural analysis will include foreign competitors, larger selection of potential entrants, larger scope of possible substitutes and more possibilities that the firms goals and personalities will be different and perceptions of what is strategically important (Comerford, 1985).

## 2 Usage of Data in Strategic Decision Making in Schools

### *2.1 Facilitation*

Data driven strategic decision making is a powerful tool is the education sector with greater emphasis on school improvements. Data driven decision making facilitates continuous improvement in school by usage of fit for purpose data collection, analysis and applications into the improvement plans. The frameworks of effective data driven decision making techniques are used to analyze test scores, student achievements, reduce achievement gaps between student subgroups, improvement of teacher quality, improvement of curriculum, sharing best practices among schools and regions, communication of education issues more effectively with key stakeholders, promotion of parental involvement in the education process and increase dialogue within the educational community (Messelt, 2004). Education authorities have collected student and institutional information based on test scores, enrollment data, budget and finance information and human resources data. Data driven making process is proven to be worthwhile when the technology infrastructure requires upgrading, enabling acceptance of data collection and its applicable data analysis. The correlation between student activity level in relation to student discipline, performance and attendance can be found. Data and information are easily available which is conducive to knowledgeable decision making which enhances performance in the education sector

### ***2.2 Developing Knowledge***

Data can develop a solid blueprint of knowledge with measurable results for continuous improvement through its proper use. Achievement gaps are significantly reduced by data through the availability of quantifiable evidence which takes out the psychologically aspects and guesswork by the education and school authorities. Regions have an opportunity of analyzing performance data of categories of students including addressing problems at the school. Data aids in the evaluation of student composition including profiling them. This enables equitable distribution of resources as per justifiable needs and redistributing students to the appropriate classrooms. Teaching quality by incorporating data is improved by having systems which focus on specific professional development needs of region staff. Education officials and teaching staff are able to engage a proactive approach when reviewing curriculum design and development with the usage of data driven decision making systems. Demographic data obtains characteristics and personal profile of the students and the schools. In some cases when considering the effects of synergies a multi criteria methodology is adequate to compile objectives aspects and developing optimization leading to opportunities for decision makers preferences to be included (Alencar & Almeida, 2008)

Data aids education officials and teachers to garner information which they might not otherwise have possessed. This includes identifying programs which are not performing and the root causes of problems. In such scenarios it's possible to have interventions such as holiday tuition, extra classes after normal time and other after-school programs as corrective actions. Data enables the determination of best practices in the schools which leads to superior performance levels. This encourages benchmarking to take place between the stakeholders. As outlined in fig 3 it's essential to acknowledge the impact of the tools, the outcome of the decision making process, the strengths of feedback loops and the differences among the level of end users in the region (Mandinach, Honey & Light 2006).

Procedural analysis of data will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of students in the subjects taken. This makes it possible for teaching staff to identify specific areas of the curriculum/syllabus which will be required to be reviewed. The same approach will help the parents to particpaite well in students home works, assignments, parents teachers association and educational planning. Data from high quality observations have a greater potential to transform

principal use of data related to human capital decision with focus on professional development, hiring and retention (Goldring et al, 2014). The consistency, transparency and specificity of observation data has more advantages over test score based measures when considering usage of teacher capabilities to shape decisions in the schools.

### *2.3 Solutions of Data-Driven Decision Making Systems*

Organizations should be able to prepare there in house data driven decision making solutions and additionally procure turnkey data management and analysis systems. Working with vendors enables regions to streamline their data management and analysis investments, mitigating the costs associated with the unpredictability of the development and there maintenance aspects. The source of information is from schools information systems, financial authorities, human resources, examinations system, teachers development programs and other applicable stakeholders systems. Data is passed through the extraction, transformation and loading tool where missing or any errors are looked for and corrective actions taken. The data is stored in s data warehouse

The heart of the data driven decision making system is the data analysis. Its a analytical tool that does mining, forecasting and analysis of information from data sources and data warehouses, Users are able to process real time, produces customized reports and reduces the time and effort if manual approaches were to be used. Decision support tool recommends and outlines corrective measures to address problems resulting from the data analysis process. Analyse existing applications, data, documents and other artifacts so as to effectively monitor the progress and come up with well informed game changing decisions. Issues can be identified and corrective actions taken when data driven decision making is monitored in real time and feed back. Its important to have support services such as training, upgrades, assessments and maintenance from the suppliers of data driven decision making systems to be able to sustain the usages. This system users must enthusiastic learn and be high skilled to use strategies and procedures to enable achievement of higher operational efficiencies.

### *2.4 Preparations*

Key to creating momentum behind any data-driven decision making effort is a proactive leader who understands the vision, champions the cause, helps others in the region realize the impact of data analysis and understands that the entire process takes time (Messelt, 2004). The requirements will be building collecting intuition to be able to see opportunities and threats faster and precisely. The quality of decision making is enhanced by forming diverse teams to stimulate quick conflict. Sustaining of the momentum of strategic choice is based on ensuring proper timing of strategic decision making. Decision makers should not engage in destructive interpersonal conflict and time wasting politics (Eisenhardt, 1999). The Education Officers generally translates the board’s vision for the school region into measurable goals based on data and works with region authorities, staff, parents and other community stakeholders to craft plans for meeting goals by certain dates They will also collects data to show clear, steady progress and celebrates successes, evaluates shortcomings and revises plans for improvement based on data, along with the school board

In general, the School Board outlines for the Education Officers and other staff members and stakeholders how region performance will be assessed and develops a vision for the school based on data demonstrating what has been accomplished so far and what further development is required. They will examine pertinent data to assess the region's progress toward predetermined objectives, and they will update objectives and improvement plans in light of the facts. By broadening the conversation, widespread involvement in improvement initiatives helps to

foster strong support for such initiatives and provide sensible solutions. Participants' and their companions' motivation raises the possibility that the endeavor will result in positive action. In addition to increasing ownership of and dedication to certain tactics, participants should be well-prepared for their role in putting changes into practice. Establishing the foundation for a region-wide transition to an information, education, and communication culture is the ideal approach for the leader to get started. Identifying "data champions" within the company is one method to do that. These "believers" need to represent all social classes. A collaborative approach is also necessary for the successful integration of data-driven decision making, especially between the education authorities and the board of education. Both individual tasks and the region's expectations must be precisely stated, quantifiable, and achievable.

There are technological obstacles to overcome, many of them have to do with data availability and dependability. There is a lack of personnel and resources, challenges in cleaning up data from various sources to make it compatible, a variety of entry and accuracy errors that, when analyzed, can result in incorrect conclusions, the requirement to digitize vast amounts of information, and issues with data quality. Teachers' use of data-driven decision making in response to intervention policies for improving the academic success of high school pupils at risk was hampered by inadequate training and accountability pressure (Kressler, 2014). The strength of data analysis depends on the quality of the data it is drawn from. The quality of judgments that administrators are making based on the data may be questioned if the data is questionable. Many areas have chosen to test their data-driven decision making systems on a smaller scale with a particular school, program, or student body in order to get over these obstacles. They may develop "data believers," foster trust, and raise the possibility of buy-in at the regional level by demonstrating success on this level. Messelt (2004).

### *2.5 Implementation of data-driven decision making system*

The beginning of the process commences by finding out what is to be learnt and the vision of data collection. An information audit is done to so at come up with the data being collected and review the compatibility of the data sources. It’s essential to determine the type of additional data required where qualitative and quantitative data is of high value. Qualitative data can be gathered through surveys, administering questionnaires, interview schedules, observations and secondary sources. Data-driven decision making is all about correlating data elements and exploring those factors that contribute both positively and negatively to student and teacher performance (Messelt, 2004). To achieve the required standards paper systems need to be done away with, the compatible systems and networks should be able to receive data, have appropriate data with the universal keys and allocate responsibility for determined data elements. The approach can be overall usage of existing information technology systems or if not possible then acquire fit for purpose data management systems.

Knowledge of spreadsheets and data base techniques involving filtering, sorting, coding, histograms, charts and tables is required for data analysis. Additional statistical techniques such as correlation, regression and causation are required. Longitudinal measurements will make a difference to the outcome as they cover substantial periods to monitor progress, change and developments which could be even annually. Data should be broken down, categorized and coded to produce a snap shot of the information. The results of data interpretation should be made available at the in- process phase to enable commencement of the decision making task., Forums for teachers, education authorities and stakeholders should be available to enable participants to

gain skills and have a shared understanding of the data to facilitate the decision making process. These dialogues help participants gain skills in data analysis. They learn to separate data from inference, to bring out multiple perspectives, to test out interpretations of data with additional data and relevant research, and to explore not just obvious explanations, but the root causes of problems (Nancy, 2001)

Defining new strategies is now possible after the outcome of understanding the relationships and even gaps in the data. Implementation of the strategies, changes and corrective actions takes place. Additionally benchmarking is incorporated to make gains from the performance of top notch schools and regions. The results should be shared out with the stakeholders through appropriate communication channels. This is in the form of simple tables, charts, histogram and the school reports covering the various itemized functions of the schools. All this indicates the importance of having appropriate systems approach to provide the opportunity to examine how data driven decision making is felt in the educational settings by identifying and understanding the interconnections among components that impact schools as complex and evolving systems. (Mandinach, 2005). Data driven enterprises will also require systems for advanced computation like clickstream log analysis, getting real time insights into streaming data, business forecasting and near – interactive experience for large volumes of data (Kunjir, 2014)

**Conclusion**

Data-driven strategic decision-making processes are crucial for improving student accomplishment, enhancing overall school performance, and enabling informed decision-making. In all facets of strategic decision making, the leadership must give top priority to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and quality data use. Improving curriculum development, fostering better communication, enhancing financial management, and encouraging parent and other stakeholder engagement are other advantageous areas. A key component of maintaining the facility is the engagement of information specialists in the provision, training, support, and maintenance of data analysis modules and data management systems. Data warehouses have the power to impact organizational infrastructure throughout the whole firm. A data warehouse management systems success model must be created and validated, with an emphasis on the crucial elements that support and direct the data warehouse's successful deployment. During the process of making strategic decisions, data with adequate security can maintain its efficacy and efficiency. Strong models for fine-tuning data layouts across many systems are constructed using workload traces. The availability of high-quality data makes it possible to assess progress and establish business guidelines for data governance standards. Making strategic decisions is a crucial part of putting a business on a path to long-term positioning and maximum earnings.

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