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Leadership Capacity Building Through The “My Decisions” Initiative: A Cross-Sectional Assessment in The Kurdistan Region

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ABSTRACT

Leadership capacity building increasingly depends on developing individuals who can make informed decisions, regulate competing priorities, collaborate effectively, and translate individual judgment into collective organizational performance. This paper examines the “My Decisions” initiative as a leadership-capacity development approach in the Kurdistan Region. The study is structured as a cross-sectional analytical assessment based exclusively on the supplied literature and publicly identified program material rather than on an independently collected participant dataset. The theoretical framework integrates situational leadership, decision-making, time-management, team-process, motivation, strategic planning, and experiential learning perspectives. Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between decision autonomy and leadership development, because effective leadership requires not merely authority but the capacity to adapt behavior to contextual demands and follower needs. Hersey and Blanchard’s situational perspective provides the principal theoretical foundation for interpreting how decision competence can be translated into leadership behavior (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). The analysis indicates that a decision-centered initiative can contribute to leadership capacity when it combines structured reflection, adaptive judgment, responsibility, team interaction, and opportunities to apply decisions in realistic contexts. At the same time, a cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, while differences in organizational context may influence program outcomes. The paper proposes an integrated leadership-capacity model for interpreting the “My Decisions” initiative and identifies directions for longitudinal and comparative evaluation in the Kurdistan Region.

Keywords: Leadership development, decision-making, leadership capacity, situational leadership, team processes, strategic planning, employee motivation, Kurdistan Region, cross-sectional assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership development has progressively moved beyond the acquisition of formal managerial knowledge toward the development of adaptive capabilities that enable individuals to interpret situations, select appropriate courses of action, communicate decisions, and mobilize others. Leadership therefore represents both an interpersonal process and a decision-oriented organizational capability. Classical leadership approaches

emphasize the relationship between leader behavior and situational requirements, while contemporary treatments connect leadership with development, performance, motivation, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner III, 2020).

The “My Decisions” initiative provides a useful context for examining this relationship in the Kurdistan Region. A decision-centered leadership-development program is

particularly relevant because leadership capacity cannot be understood exclusively through positional authority. Individuals at different organizational levels frequently make decisions concerning priorities, collaboration, resource use, conflict, time, and performance. The quality of those decisions can affect both individual effectiveness and wider team outcomes.

The theoretical importance of decision competence is evident in situational leadership theory. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) conceptualize effective leadership as dependent on the relationship between leadership behavior and the developmental characteristics of followers. From this perspective, leadership development should equip individuals to diagnose circumstances and adapt their responses rather than rely on one fixed leadership style. A decision-development initiative can therefore function as a mechanism through which participants learn to connect judgment with contextual demands.

The practical problem addressed by this paper is the need to understand how a decision-focused initiative may contribute to leadership capacity and what conditions are necessary for such development to become organizationally meaningful. Existing literature supplied for this study addresses leadership, motivation, team building, decision-making, planning, time management, expert reasoning, and leadership development, but these themes are rarely integrated into a single analytical model focused on the “My Decisions” initiative.

Accordingly, the objectives are to examine the theoretical foundations of decision-centered leadership development, identify the principal dimensions through which the initiative can strengthen leadership capacity, analyze its implications within the Kurdistan Region, and establish methodological foundations for evaluating its effectiveness. The paper focuses on leadership-related capabilities rather than claiming experimentally demonstrated program effects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership as an Adaptive Capacity

Leadership is increasingly interpreted as a multidimensional process involving behavioral flexibility, interpersonal influence, decision quality, and the ability to respond to changing organizational conditions. Northouse (2021) presents leadership theory as encompassing

multiple perspectives through which leadership behavior can be understood, while Yukl and Gardner III (2020) emphasize leadership effectiveness within organizational contexts. Together, these perspectives support the argument that leadership capacity involves more than possessing a formal leadership position.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) provide the principal theoretical foundation for this study by emphasizing the importance of matching leadership behavior to situational requirements and follower development. Their model is particularly relevant to decision-centered development because the quality of a decision depends partly on the leader's ability to recognize the characteristics of the situation. Thus, leadership capacity can be conceptualized as the ability to diagnose, decide, communicate, and adapt.

The “My Decisions” approach can consequently be interpreted not simply as a decision-making program but as a potential mechanism for cultivating adaptive leadership behavior. Participants who learn to assess alternatives and accept responsibility for consequences may become more capable of responding to organizational situations without depending excessively on predetermined procedures.

2.2 Decision-Making, Planning, and Time Management

Decision-making is closely associated with planning because decisions determine priorities, resource allocation, and subsequent action. Lessard (1998) demonstrates the relevance of adaptive approaches to planning and decision-making, suggesting that planning processes must accommodate changing conditions rather than operate as rigid sequences. Steiner (2010) similarly positions strategic planning as a systematic process through which organizational objectives can be connected with future-oriented action.

Time management provides another important dimension. Macan (1994) identifies time management as a process rather than merely a collection of scheduling techniques. This distinction is significant for leadership development because ineffective prioritization can undermine otherwise sound decisions. A leader may identify an appropriate strategic objective but fail to implement it because insufficient attention is given to sequencing, deadlines, competing demands, or resource constraints.

A decision-centered initiative can therefore connect three

processes: diagnosis of a situation, prioritization of alternatives, and implementation within temporal constraints. Such integration increases the developmental value of decision training because participants are encouraged to evaluate not only what decision is preferable but also whether it is feasible.

2.3 Team Processes, Motivation, and Leadership

Leadership decisions rarely occur in isolation. Khan and Wajidi (2019) connect leadership and team building with employee motivation, while Somech (2006) examines relationships among leadership style, team processes, performance, and innovation. These studies suggest that leadership capacity should be assessed partly through its effects on collective interaction.

This perspective creates an important distinction between individual decision competence and leadership capacity. A person may make technically rational decisions but still fail as a leader if decisions are communicated poorly, undermine team participation, or reduce motivation. Leadership development should therefore incorporate interpersonal consequences into decision evaluation.

Schaffer (2008) further links leadership and motivation, reinforcing the proposition that leadership decisions have behavioral consequences. A “My Decisions” framework should consequently encourage participants to consider stakeholders, team dynamics, motivation, and implementation rather than treating decisions as purely individual cognitive exercises.

2.4 Experiential and Expert-Oriented Learning

Mandin et al. (1997) examine how learners can be assisted in developing expert-like thinking when solving clinical problems. Although their context differs from organizational leadership, the underlying educational implication is relevant: effective development requires learners to move beyond memorizing information toward structured problem-solving.

Williams and Ericsson (2008) similarly address how experts learn, providing a conceptual basis for understanding expertise as an evolving capability. These perspectives support an experiential interpretation of leadership development. Decision competence is unlikely to emerge solely from lectures about leadership. Participants require opportunities to analyze situations,

compare alternatives, evaluate consequences, and reflect on outcomes.

Ricketts and Ricketts (2010) place leadership development within a broader framework of personal development and career success. This supports the interpretation of leadership capacity as an ongoing developmental process rather than a one-time training outcome.

2.5 Research Gap

The supplied literature establishes strong theoretical links among leadership, decision-making, planning, time management, motivation, teamwork, and learning. However, a specific analytical integration of these dimensions around the “My Decisions” initiative in the Kurdistan Region remains limited in the material provided. The research gap therefore concerns the development of a coherent framework capable of explaining how decision-centered learning may translate into broader leadership capacity.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a cross-sectional analytical research design. Because no original participant-level dataset, sample size, questionnaire responses, or statistical output were supplied, the paper does not fabricate quantitative findings. Instead, the cross-sectional assessment is operationalized as a structured evaluation framework derived from the supplied literature and the identified “MyDecisions” program material.

The unit of analysis is the leadership-development process represented by the initiative. The analytical focus is placed on the relationship between decision competence and five interconnected leadership-capacity dimensions: adaptive judgment, planning and prioritization, team-oriented decision-making, motivational awareness, and reflective learning.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The proposed framework places decision competence at the center of leadership capacity building. Hersey and Blanchard’s (1982) situational leadership perspective provides the central theoretical mechanism: effective action requires an alignment between contextual

conditions and leadership behavior.

The framework can be represented conceptually as:

Context Diagnosis → Decision Evaluation → Adaptive Choice → Team Communication → Implementation → Reflection → Leadership Capacity

Context diagnosis requires participants to identify the nature of a problem and relevant stakeholder conditions. Decision evaluation involves comparing alternatives according to organizational objectives, feasibility, risks, and consequences. Adaptive choice requires selecting an action appropriate to the situation. Team communication connects individual judgment with collective implementation. Reflection creates an opportunity to assess the consequences of the decision and modify future behavior.

This cyclical structure is consistent with the adaptive orientation of leadership emphasized by Hersey and Blanchard (1982) and with the planning logic discussed by Lessard (1998) and Steiner (2010).

3.3 Analytical Dimensions

The first dimension, adaptive judgment, concerns the capacity to adjust leadership responses according to situational characteristics. A hypothetical participant might encounter a team member who possesses strong technical ability but requires little supervision. A directive decision would therefore be less appropriate than a participatory or delegating response. The example illustrates why leadership development must include situational diagnosis rather than rigid behavioral prescriptions.

The second dimension, planning and prioritization, concerns the conversion of decisions into achievable actions. Macan (1994) indicates why time-management processes matter: effective management of time involves organizing behavior around priorities. Within the initiative, participants could evaluate competing organizational tasks and justify which should receive immediate attention.

The third dimension, team-oriented decision-making, examines whether participants consider collaboration, communication, and collective performance. Somech (2006) and Khan and Wajidi (2019) support the relevance of team processes and motivation to leadership outcomes.

The fourth dimension, motivational awareness, assesses whether decisions recognize employee needs and behavioral consequences. A decision that improves short-term efficiency but systematically reduces employee engagement may not represent effective leadership.

The fifth dimension, reflective learning, evaluates whether participants learn from decisions and develop increasingly sophisticated problem-solving strategies. Mandin et al. (1997) and Williams and Ericsson (2008) provide conceptual support for learning processes that progressively develop expert-like reasoning.

3.4 Cross-Sectional Assessment Logic

A practical cross-sectional assessment could collect participant responses at a single period following exposure to the initiative. Indicators could include perceived confidence in decision-making, ability to identify alternative solutions, capacity to prioritize tasks, willingness to assume responsibility, team communication, and perceived adaptability.

The analysis should distinguish between perceived development and demonstrated behavioral change. Self-reported confidence may increase without corresponding improvements in decision quality. Therefore, hypothetical case-based tasks, supervisor assessments, and structured scenarios would provide stronger evidence than self-report measures alone.

3.5 Analytical Limitations

The principal methodological limitation is the absence of original empirical observations in the supplied material. Consequently, the findings presented below are analytical findings derived from the literature and program framework, not statistically verified effects among a defined participant sample. A genuine empirical evaluation would require a documented sampling strategy, validated instruments, demographic information, reliability analysis, and appropriate inferential statistics.

4. RESULTS

The analytical assessment indicates that the strongest potential contribution of the “My Decisions” initiative lies in connecting individual decision-making with broader leadership competencies. Decision-making operates as a central mechanism through which adaptive judgment,

planning, interpersonal interaction, and accountability can be integrated.

First, the framework indicates that adaptive judgment is fundamental to leadership capacity. A participant who understands that leadership behavior should change according to follower and situational conditions is more likely to avoid applying identical responses to fundamentally different organizational problems. This interpretation follows the situational foundation established by Hersey and Blanchard (1982).

Second, the assessment identifies planning and prioritization as necessary supporting capabilities. Decisions without implementation structures have limited organizational value. The relationship between adaptive planning and decision-making identified by Lessard (1998), combined with the process orientation of time management described by Macan (1994), indicates that leadership development should evaluate whether individuals can transform choices into organized action.

Third, the analysis identifies team interaction as a mediating mechanism between individual decisions and organizational outcomes. Leadership decisions influence employee motivation, collaboration, and innovation. The literature supplied by Somech (2006) and Khan and Wajidi (2019) therefore suggests that decision competence should be evaluated according to both technical rationality and interpersonal consequences.

Fourth, reflective learning emerges as a significant developmental mechanism. Mandin et al. (1997) and Williams and Ericsson (2008) support an interpretation of expertise as involving increasingly sophisticated problem-solving processes. The “My Decisions” initiative can therefore have greater developmental value when participants examine why a decision succeeded or failed rather than merely recording the final outcome.

Finally, the analysis suggests that leadership capacity is best conceptualized as a multidimensional capability rather than a single skill. Ricketts and Ricketts (2010), Northouse (2021), and Yukl and Gardner III (2020) collectively support a broad interpretation of leadership development involving personal, behavioral, and organizational dimensions. The initiative's potential effectiveness therefore depends on whether decision training is integrated with communication, motivation, teamwork, planning, and adaptive behavior.

5. Discussion

The findings position the “My Decisions” initiative within a broader transition from leadership training toward leadership capability development. This distinction is theoretically important. Training may provide knowledge about leadership concepts, whereas capacity development requires individuals to use knowledge under conditions involving uncertainty, competing priorities, and interpersonal consequences.

The central theoretical implication concerns the relationship between decision autonomy and situational leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) provide a useful explanation for why leadership cannot be reduced to one preferred behavioral style. A decision-development program can operationalize this principle by presenting participants with situations that require different responses. In one case, a leader may need to provide structure; in another, the leader may need to encourage participation or delegate responsibility. The developmental objective is therefore not simply “better decisions” but contextually appropriate decisions.

The framework also demonstrates an important trade-off between decision speed and decision quality. Strategic and operational environments sometimes reward rapid action, but rapid decisions may fail when stakeholders, risks, and alternatives are insufficiently considered. Steiner (2010) and Lessard (1998) support the importance of planning while recognizing the need to respond to changing circumstances. Effective leadership development should therefore teach participants when extensive analysis is justified and when timely action is more valuable.

Another implication concerns the tension between individual autonomy and collective participation. A program emphasizing “my decisions” could unintentionally encourage excessively individualistic leadership if decision ownership is interpreted as decision isolation. The literature on team processes and motivation suggests the opposite direction: effective leadership should preserve individual accountability while incorporating relevant team perspectives (Khan & Wajidi, 2019; Somech, 2006). The initiative would therefore be stronger if decision ownership were defined as responsibility for outcomes rather than exclusion of others from the decision process.

The findings further indicate that leadership development

should include reflection. Williams and Ericsson (2008) and Mandin et al. (1997) provide conceptual support for learning processes through which individuals develop more advanced reasoning. This suggests that post-decision reflection may be as important as decision selection itself.

Nevertheless, the present assessment has substantial limitations. Its cross-sectional orientation restricts conclusions about long-term behavioral change. Without longitudinal observations, it is impossible to establish whether capabilities acquired through the initiative persist. Likewise, the absence of participant-level quantitative data prevents causal claims concerning program effectiveness. Cultural, institutional, occupational, and organizational differences within the Kurdistan Region may also influence how leadership and decision-making are interpreted.

Future empirical research should therefore combine cross-sectional assessment with longitudinal follow-up, scenario-based performance tasks, participant self-assessments, and supervisor evaluations. Such a mixed-method design would provide stronger evidence regarding whether improvements in decision confidence correspond to measurable improvements in leadership behavior.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper examined leadership capacity building through the "My Decisions" initiative by integrating the supplied literature on situational leadership, decision-making, strategic planning, time management, teamwork, motivation, and experiential learning. The analysis indicates that decision competence can function as a central mechanism for leadership development when it is connected with contextual diagnosis, adaptive behavior, planning, team communication, accountability, and reflection.

The principal theoretical contribution is the proposed integration of decision-making with situational leadership. Rather than treating leadership development as the acquisition of fixed behaviors, the framework conceptualizes leadership capacity as an adaptive process through which individuals diagnose situations, evaluate alternatives, select contextually appropriate actions, implement decisions, and learn from outcomes. This interpretation is consistent with the situational perspective of Hersey and Blanchard (1982).

For the Kurdistan Region, the framework offers a structured basis for evaluating initiatives intended to strengthen leadership capabilities. However, the conclusions should not be interpreted as statistically established program effects because no original participant dataset was supplied. The next stage of research should empirically test the framework through a clearly defined sample, validated measurement instruments, comparative groups where feasible, and longitudinal follow-up.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of a decision-centered leadership initiative depends not simply on teaching individuals to make choices but on enabling them to make adaptive, responsible, strategically informed, and socially effective choices. Such an approach can transform decision-making from an isolated managerial function into a broader foundation for sustainable leadership capacity.

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