Book Review

Hungarian Educational Research
Journal

Gigalová, V. (2018). Management imagination. Decisions of managers, rationality, intuition, and metaphors. Olomouc, Palacký University

2019, Vol. 9(4) 738–741

© The Author(s) 2019

<https://akademai.com/loi/063>

Akadémiai Kiadó

DOI:10.1556/063.9.2019.4.62

Reviewed by Kristýna Ambruzová¹

PhDr. Veronika Gigalová, PhD, is a lecturer at Palacký University Olomouc. She belongs to the Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology. Her focus is on the theory of organization and organization in today's social context. At present, she is researching on the topic of managing the decision-making process and mostly its intuitive part. She has written more than 10 other publications.

In general, this book deals with managerial decision-making, which (if we want to know them irreducibly and understand it more deeply) we also have to understand two contradictory levels: rationality and intuition. There is no clear border between these categories, although managerial decision-making is generally understood as a purely rational process. The publication points to the fact that, not only knowledge, experiences and emotions influence our decision-making. In addition, we often have to decide intuitively. The concept of this publication comes from research based on interviews combined with the theoretical knowledge from various literature.

This book consists of three main chapters. The first chapter deals with managerial decision-making and its process. Decision-making is one of the most important functions of managers, which fulfills mainly in planning process. The analytical model of decision-making is a process with several steps. Veber's very detailed model contains identification

---

¹ Faculty of Education, Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology, Palacký University Olomouc, tř. Svobody 671/8, 779 00 Olomouc, Email address: kikaamb@gmail.com, ORCID: [0000-0001-8838-670X](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8838-670X)

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes, provided the original author and source are credited, a link to the CC License is provided, and changes – if any – are indicated.

---

of the problem → analysis and formulation of the problem → evaluation criteria → creation of variants → setting their consequences → evaluation of the results and choosing from the variants. Two more steps are realization and control of the outcomes. On the other hand, the rationally emotional model makes importance in choosing from an ideal version and it also assumes the complex knowledge of all the possible results, but the main difference is in choosing the final solution. Moreover, today, organizations go through several changes all the time; these new situations need a team of managers that can deal with it. Management needs to be ready for specific conditions, such as time pressure, limited information, absence of suitable people, mental or emotional burden, etc.

The second chapter deals with intuition in the decision-making process. There are three main theories (models). Gigerenzer's theory of heuristics states that usage of these theories might be a successful instrument for decision-making because of its simplicity and rapidity when it comes to changes in the organization. He argues that heuristics should not lead us to conceive of human thinking as riddled with irrational cognitive biases, but rather to conceive rationality as an adaptive tool that is not identical to the rules of formal logic. Daniel Kahneman on the contrary says that intuition may cause problems and its inaccurate and simple heuristics can be distorted by our first impressions. Later, Hogarth comes with a kind of solution for these two models; he connects all the factors that influence the decision-making process. *"We often decide on the basis of what catches our attention at first place before we rationally consider all the possibilities"* (Hogarth, 2010). His theory offers simplified model of the real decision-making process, which shows how to use intuition in this process. What influences rational and intuitive decision-making in the first place are emotions. Expected emotions are the ones that might be used in the future; they are often suppressed by immediate emotions, which makes them less important and have bad consequences and it causes mistakes in decision-making. Immediate emotions are the combination of expected consequences, emotions, and random influence. Secondary emotions in the form of somatic marker enable to make rapid moral decisions under time pressure. Somatic marker hypothesis is interesting. We can talk about them as emotional reactions with a strong somatic part that supports decision-making, including rational decision-making. These reactions are based upon the individual's previous experiences with similar situations. According to the hypothesis, somatic markers strongly influence later decision-making. Within the brain, somatic markers are believed to be processed in the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and the amygdala. Moreover, the attitude of the organization can support or suppress the usage of intuition in the decision-making process. Intuition supported by the manager's experience and knowledge is more reliable, so managers can benefit from intuition only at the point when intuitive knowledge is stronger than the explicit one. It is useful in complicated decision-making situations, where the ability of the managers to make a moral decision is absolutely necessary.

The last part of the book introduces research on why and how managers use metaphors in their decision-making. The main research question was “How managers rationalize their decisions?” Decision-making is an unconscious process, which is usually rationalized by superiors or subordinate afterward and needs to be justified by managers, so metaphors are what helps them. According to most definitions, a metaphor is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that is not literally true but helps explain an idea or make a comparison. Metaphoric saying reflects their previous knowledge and experience as well as the emotions and feelings at the moment. The research includes interviews with 18 managers from different types of organization. Three questions were asked during their interviews. What type of organization and manager place do they have and how long do they work in? How would they describe the recent decisions they made? In which situations they realize the decision-making process? This was enough for the managers to start talking about their work and rationalizing the decisions they made. Three types of metaphors were used in three phases. Upon considering established systems, they use general metaphors that can be found in everyday communication. In the second phase, they were using metaphors that are used for specific situations in their organization. The last type of metaphors is the ones that come from the personality of the manager, so they give reasons “how and why I do it like this.” This type is used very rarely in unexpected situations. From the interviews, two categories could be seen: using plural to describe the organization and singular to describe employees. There are some frequently repeated metaphors in both categories, which refer to a specific object. Organization as a machine, where the organization is understood as a precise mechanism, works in a very rational way and the rules must be followed. Organization as a Moloch also has exact rules and standards, but there is someone from outside who sets them, most often with international companies, whose management is in different countries. Organization as a family has formally set rules but also new ones set by the community of employees; managers make their decisions with the help of the colleagues and use their own intuition. Referring to the employee as a flower when it comes to their motivation or further education and taking care of them as a flower, their performance and results get better. The employee is also compared to a child that needs to be taken care of and it should show socialization within the organization and employee as an animal. Here, we can see the mostly used common characteristics of some animals that refer to age, experience, or persistence. In all these cases, it is very difficult to transfer them from one language to another because of their specific meanings.

This publication aims to students of andragogy and familiar disciplines. It might be useful for beginning managers to see examples from the interview research and to understand that decision-making is a complex process dealing with two contradictory levels. You can find many psychological elements throughout the book. Not only the aforementioned somatic markers, but also the book portrays the connection between our emotions, intuition, and cognitive functions.

To sum it up, this book explains the decision-making process in a professional way using a lot of supportive literature and research results. It might be a bit difficult to understand certain parts of the book for a reader who is unfamiliar with the topic like this. At the same time, the references might help in understanding. The major thing that emerges from this book is that not only gained experience and knowledge, but also emotions and intuition are integral to the decision-making process of managers.

Reference

Hogarth, R. M. (2010). Intuition: A challenge for psychological research on decision making. *Psychological Inquiry*, 21, 338–353. doi:[10.1080/1047840X.2010.520260](https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2010.520260)