

# Theories for decision making



## **Introduction**

Nowadays, there are different kinds of management techniques among people, especially communicating within a group of people in particular discussion. During the discussion, process in making effective and credible decision is very important in order to draw a result without any conflicts generally. Many people are facing a problem about the usage of group progress, that good and bad decision making may be quite complicated towards some people. Good decision making means that every member will agree with each other in order to work together effectively among their jobs, while bad decision making will be made if people cannot firmly make their decision well and cause vicious effect on their work. Although there are many group members, especially leaders of group try their best to discover more ways to cooperate with colleagues, while conflicts still can be found everywhere due to different viewpoints and ideas are firmly held in someone's mind (Collin et al., 2012)..

However, no matter you are alone, or even being a part of group, your decision making may still be affected as own decision making can be easily affected by group's opinion. Therefore being a group leader, they should know how to form good decision making, and how to prevent bad decision making during the discussion process. From past to now, many social psychologists have point out that good decision making can be drawn if well-organised and critical thinking should be found in group leaders, even members. In the essay below, some relevant theories and critical explanations will be combined in order to provide an informational discussion on how to making good and bad decision (Busenitz & Barney, 1997).

Moreover research evidences may also be used in supporting the process for good decision making, and the reason why people may draw such bad decision during discussions. This kind of organisations can provide a critical and informative essay in discussing the procedures within good and bad decision making in the group.

### **Path to make good decisions (Relevant Theories)**

In the past few decades, there are many social psychologists point out that some personal mental behaviours may affect the discussion, especially making decision among team members. Zajonc claim that if there are any appropriate response or arousal, group performance and members can be enhanced (Zajonc, 1965). Therefore the Drive Theory of Social Facilitation (Zajonc, 1965) can well explain the reason why people would like to generate better decision while group members can provide good environment and decision. Because this kind of way can evaluate apprehension during discussion, in order to reduce conflicts and worries, which can let group members be more relax to make good decision (Seo & Barrett, 2007).

Being a member in a group, many cases show that they cannot have effective communication among those team members as they will keep holding their own ideas or viewpoints, then it may cause lots of conflicts in arguing for decision making in particular issue. In this situation, facilitators and bystanders are required among discussion in order to provide another viewpoints, which is different from the insiders. According to Bibb Latane and John Darley (1970), People, especially bystanders among the situation may have higher chance to perform better behaviours and make good decision, <https://assignbuster.com/theories-for-decision-making/>

when they are facing any emergency situation in the society (Latane & Darley, 1968).

Regarding to the Emergency Norm Theory, bystanders may have higher chance to help other people, which be pointed out that people will be persuaded to aid those needs. In similar, facilitators in a group take the role to identify those problems with a third-person view that may not suffer in any bias. Facilitators should not be directive in any ideas as they should stay outside and provide independent opinion. In the office environment, each team members, or colleagues should work together that without any bias. Then third-person view and special ideas may be made during particular discussion between each other (Bickman, 1971). Therefore people should ensure their own psychological status in order to maintain stable discussion behind conflicts.

Before making good decision during a series of discussion, deep understanding of particular discussion topic is very important as pointed out by Kurt Lewin. Lewin said " You cannot understand a system until you try to change it", it means that changing of mental and physical behaviour is useful for a team to draw effective and powerful decision among different kinds of conflicts. Moreover leaders who really want to form good decision within their own group, working environment should be well designed because behaviour is a combination of individuals and proper environment, which is proposed by Lewin (Brug et al., 2006). At the beginning of changes or even discussion, separate discussions within subgroups are required as it can provide sufficient spaces for members to discuss their own ideas in order to form a small conclusion. After that proper support and mind setting should

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be given towards group member or colleagues, therefore they can have more effective ways to maintain and try their best to have new job or make any decision under harmonious decision making process.

In order to provide more effectiveness of their own points of view, those social psychologists have already pay more efforts in generate several research and conduct different experiment to point out their power of theories.

### **Path to make good decision (Relevant Researches)**

According to Zajonc's cockroaches experiment which explain the behaviour of a group of cockroaches in tacking different level of tasks, in order to point out the changes of human behaviours during group processing. During the experiment, cockroaches are assigned a simple task and a more difficult task for them to complete while a group cockroaches will need to be do it together. Zajonc (1969) would like to find out whether a group can provide better results in these kinds of task or not.

However, Zajonc found out that group of cockroaches can complete a simple tasks under the social facilitation while they cannot complete such difficult tasks in front of their peers under social inhibition (Zajonc et al., 1970).

Generally, the basic concepts and usage of theory can be wisely applied into human being as these kinds of behaviours can also be found on a group of people during discussion, especially decision making. Because people would like to perform well in front of other people in order to gain confidence and recognition, however people cannot be compare with cockroaches due to

higher intelligence ability can be on human being than that on cockroaches (Zajonc, Wolosin, Wolosin & Sherman, 1968).

Apart from Zajonc's studies, Bibb Latene and John Darley (1970) have done an experiment in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of bystander intervention, which means people would like to help others who need helps. In real life situation, people definitely give a helping hand towards people who are suffering in distress, such as destruction caused by natural disasters and problems carried by human disasters. In addition, the experiment have also stated out that fewer people will help others in emergency if the group size become larger. Therefore leaders should prevent oversize of each group, and they may put two to four people in a group, while several subgroups should be used in order to maintain better communication and decision making (Petty et al., 1977). Although Latene and Darley pointed out that increasing in size of group while decreasing in percentage of helps generally, the results generated in experiment may not be suitable to be applied on people nowadays. The reason is the experiment had been done in 1970s, which may be quite far from past to now, and the situation would not be well to compare with 21<sup>st</sup> century. People would like to help each other even the group size is greater than 6, such as most of the Hong Kong citizens would like to participate in helping re-construction of destroyed building after disasters, even donation of money, therefore it may not be possible to explain human behaviours nowadays (Latane, B., & Darley, J. M., 1968).

During the discussion, good decision making will not be the only products among group members, conflicts may be found within insufficient communication and impartial viewpoints of leaders. So bad decision making

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may be discovered and it has already been explained by several social psychologists with several theories in the past decades.

### **Path to make bad decision (Relevant Theories)**

First of all, Solomon Asch had also pointed out that people would like to follow the other's opinion, especially the majority ideas. During the discussion progress, group members are generally compelled by the authority in order to fit their expected results (Laughlin, 1988). In most of cases, team members would try their best to persuade themselves and pretend themselves to agree with the majority opinion, while throw their own personal ideas. This kinds of action stated that the reason why they would like to follow majority decision is they do not want to be such minority, which may be easily shamed by those eye contact from other team members. Therefore leaders should prevent team members agree with each other easily and shortly, as it means that they just follow others ideas and wish to form the results which fit the need of authority (Asch, 1951)

In most of the discussion cases, it may be very strange that group members can only spend a few time to conduct their discussion, and decision can be made in such an easy way as they said to leaders. Because of this, good decision cannot be made wisely due to such inappropriate discussion method and it will not able to solve their own problems. As said by Irving Janis (1982), group members may not wish to point out their own ideas as they think that their opinion should fit the need of their leader, even boss. They will only filter such undesirable input in order to give out some results which may be similar to leader's viewpoint. Within this situation, decision that made by those group members should not be the true opinion from

themselves, these kinds of decision are just the expected result of leaders, therefore good and fair decision which are agreed with all members may not able to be made by the whole group (Janis, 1972).

During the development of human being, they are born to obey norms, which is given out by any authorities. Stanley Milgram stated out that people will follow the instructions which are told by other people, especially those authorities such as government. Conformism can be the reason why those people would like to obey the rules or even instruction that proposed by other authorities agencies (Milgram, 1978). In the discussion, if the leaders or boss point out that they expect people to perform the particular results and decision, most of the group members would like to follow its information and form that expected decision. It may not be beneficial towards the whole group because decision making do not include any bystanders' ideas, while the whole progress of decision making is based on the expected opinion from leaders. Therefore pre-decision should not be include in the discussion, even during decision making.

Role and Rules are very important among the normal life, especially the situation of discussion and decision making as different people will take responsibility to act as particular role during the discussion. Stanley Zimbardo pointed out that great changes can be found if good people are put into bad environment. And it means that extreme changes in social environment can definitely affect the movement of everyone (Zimbardo et al., 2000).



Within the working environment, if there are only a small amount of members who are willing to propose positive and effective ideas towards the group, even company, the proper decision also may not be made as they are being surrounded by those negative ideas. Because of the majority in the group is fulfilling negative mind of the discussion, it will affect the other who have positive ideas. Therefore those subordinate position would be submit to the authority, which is the leader or boss.

Regarding to this kind of problems, good decision making should not be found because there will not have proper and non-directive discussion due to the power of such social situation is really affect the disposition of people and all of the members who hold positive idea will be compelled to agree with the majority. Then in order to have better process in making good decision, no matter leaders or boss should put more efforts on enhance colleagues' attitude.

Regarding to explain deeply about the related theories, several social psychologist have already done quite a lot experiment or researches in order to explain their viewpoints wisely.

### **Path to make bad decision (Relevant Researches)**

In Asch's research which was conducted in 1955, it can definitely point out that most of the people included in the experiment would like to follow the majority among the decision making within groups. Because they try their best to fit the expected answer that can truly explain with some real life example nowadays, there are still quite a lot of people would like to follow the majority among groups within the society generally. However, this

experiment was conducted during the cultural environment of 1950s America, it still had a fluctuated changes in the results when it was applied in different time ranges. Therefore statistics in this experiment cannot be used exactly in 21<sup>st</sup> century, while its concept and basic information can be wisely apply into the daily life generally.

Within both Zimbardo and Milgram's experiments and researches, they have generally explained the concept of conformity of people. First of all, a large group of people are divided into two subgroups in order to act as guards and prisoners respectively for a period of time. The experiment can definitely point out the role and rules ideas, while heightening anonymity and dehumanization behaviours. However those people who act as prisoners have already been suffered in several kinds of psychological problems after six days, therefore the experiment was forced to be stopped (Zimbardo, Maslach & Haney, 2000).

Apart from this, Milgram's shock experiment has stated that people would like to obey other authority, even they know that these kinds of decision may not be appropriate within their own personal mind. Although Milgram's research pointed out many effective explanation in conformism, criticism can be found in his experiment. In this experiment, Milgram only use a group of American to conduct this shock experiment while it cannot represent the whole population in the world, because there will be a difference among other countries. America and European countries will be much obedience and similar described as Milgram's result, while Asian and Muslim countries are less obedience as Milgram's experiment.

Both of the researches from Zimbardo and Milgram are very remarkable and supportive in the field of social psychology nowadays. Although some ethical concerns and cross-cultural validity may need to be aware, some ideas and concepts still have their value in conducting continuous studies in related studies.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, making a good decision is quite difficult during the particular discussion, because bad decision making may be easily found if leaders do not communicate and cooperate well with each other. In order to make good decision, leaders should not take all the responsibilities to make decision, while they are required to give out some power to colleagues, that can let them have their own ideas and opinion about own mission. Otherwise all of the group members will just follow the decision of leaders before such kind of discussion, and those expected results will be generate without any agreement between each other (Higgins, 2000).

In order to enhance effectiveness in making good decision, different subgroups are required if the whole size of group is too large. Because every group member cannot communicate well within the oversize groups, and leaders may discuss with subgroups respectively before the whole meeting, even decision making (Øvretveit, 1995). These kinds of situation can prevent blindly obedience to that authority, which can provide more chance for leaders and members to communicate during discussion before making any decision. Therefore good decision making is the responsibility of group leaders, while each group members are needed to put more efforts in

communicating between each other within every complicated progress (Gerrig, 2013).

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