



De-constructing the logic/emotion binary in educational leadership preparation and practice

Logic/emotion
binary

561

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to de-construct the traditional bifurcation of logic and emotion in the preparation of educational leaders which, following regnant business planning and management models anchored in economics, focuses almost exclusively on social science methodology and the tenets of normative decision theory in formal university based-preparation programmes in the UK and the USA. This dominant approach has many drawbacks and does not reflect how educational leaders actually engage in decision making.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is a conceptual/logical analysis of the apparent weaknesses in traditional preparatory curricula as well as a report of preliminary qualitative research derived from a non-probability, convenience sample of 13 interviews in the UK and the USA of middle-level managers in institutions of higher education.

Findings – The major findings lie in the development of an initial schematic that challenges the dominant binary in considered decisions in educational leadership. The binary regarding the separation of logic and emotion simply does not exist as emotion is always a factor in decision making. The schematic proposes a way to make emotion an inclusive part of considering decision making.

Practical implications – Traditional notions of effective decision making should be revised to include how decision makers come to understand the role their own emotions play in rendering educational decisions on the job, and university providers should begin to revamp courses and curricula which more accurately portray them.

Originality/value – The originality of the paper is in the analysis of decision making which suggests that the role of emotion is in fact, logical and rational, as opposed to non-rational in educational decision-making contexts. The value of this position is that it restores to decision-making preparation a more “real world” perspective which is often not present when so-called non-rational variables are factored out in problem-solving training in university preparation programmes.

Keywords Decision theory, Decision making, Education administration, Leadership, United Kingdom, United States of America

Paper type Conceptual paper

The preparation of educational leaders in the UK and the US universities remains entrenched in the grasp of the prevailing management literature and logic largely derived from business and economics (Ball, 1987; Bush, 2003; Cuban, 2004; Crow and Grogan, 2005; English, 2007; Lumby, 2009; Papa, 2005). This perspective is firmly grounded in social science management practice, which in turn is rooted in normative decision theory in which a decision is believed to consist of an objective and subjective part (Clough, 1984, p. 23). This classic binary (logic or reason/emotion) remains prevalent in university preparation in both countries today (Bolton and English, 2009).



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Bourdieu (1998) has criticised the dominant perspective on management practice, in which much of its philosophy is grounded in economics as mistaking “things of logic for the logic of things” (p. 101). He continues his trenchant critique of economics as:

Trusting in models that they have practically never had the occasion to subject to experimental verification, tending to look down from on high on the conclusions of the other historical sciences, in which they recognize only the purity and crystalline transparency of their mathematical games and whose real necessity and deep complexity they are most often unable to comprehend, they participate and collaborate in an enormous economic and social transformation [...] some of [whose] consequences horrify them (p. 101).

Lumby and Coleman (2007) also comment on the dominant approach in management by observing:

Much normative leadership and management literature assumes a rational approach to assessing situations and in response taking logical actions for the benefit of the organization and/or its clients. However, numerous writers have stressed that the platform of apparent conscious rationality floats on a sea of often unconscious irrationality (p. 31).

This distinction has been identified by other writers in different ways. For example, Weick (1993) differentiates between decision making in organizations and sensemaking. Whereas the former is often presented as extremely logical, following mathematical calculation and prediction, sensemaking involves a more personal perspective in which:

[...] individuals are not seen as living in, and acting out their lives in relation to, a wider reality, so much as creating and sustaining images of a wider reality [...] They realize their reality, by reading into their situation patterns of significant meaning (Morgan *et al.*, 1983, p. 24).

In other words, reality is not “out there”; rather reality is “in there,” that is, defined and sustained within humans working in organizations. This construction of reality is laced with what Lumby and Coleman (2007) called “irrationality” in which Weick’s (1993) sense-making concept “[...] is built out of vague questions, muddy answers, and negotiated agreements that attempt to reduce confusion” (p. 636).

The line of argument adopted in this paper accepts the idea that preparing educational leaders is about enabling them to understand the process of sense making in which their decision making is nested. Further, this process is laced with emotionality, that is, feelings impacted by the social construction of reality within organizations of which one external manifestation might be called “esprit de corps” or morale among many other dimensions. We proffer that emotionality is the underlying phenomenon in leadership, but is largely absent or ignored in the preparation of educational leaders. This gap is significant because it leaves those who enter educational leadership positions vulnerable to the ravages of role conflict and to the loss of his/her effectiveness. Weick (1985, pp. 51-2 cited in Weick, 1993, p. 633) has labeled severe disruptions in leadership and organizational effectiveness as a “cosmological episode” when “people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system”. Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2002) interviewed school leaders who had experienced major emotional stress based on a conflict between the values held by their superiors or the system and their own sense of what was right or wrong. Leaders who were not prepared for the intensity in such conflict suffered “wounding” which they defined as a painful episode involving “the inner face, the whole-hearted soul of a human-being, so vital and essential to the spirit of a person’s life” (p. 16).

We also note that an emerging literature regarding studies of effective leaders by George (2007) indicates that they “lead with their whole selves – their hearts as well as their heads” (White, 2007, p. B3). This perspective echoes Bennis (1989) who said, “Leaders have nothing but themselves to work with” (p. 47). George similarly observed, “Leadership is a long journey into your own soul” (White, 2007, p. B3). To this end, we wondered how formal preparation programmes engage in assisting prospective educational leaders to undertake the leadership journey.

Searching for the emotional human in business and education school curricula

In the USA there is a very long history of looking to business and, later, business schools as the antidote for everything from writing curriculum to teaching effective decision making (Callahan, 1962). The application of business methods rooted in earlier rational efficiency models has been traced to the introduction of monitorial schools in 1815 by Tanner and Tanner (1990). Later, a forceful advocate of a “business-led educational system” was Bobbitt (1913, p. 11) who argued that businessmen should set educational standards.

The business school, and its curriculum, is still held up as an example for education to emulate today (Maranto *et al.*, 2010). The US billionaire Eli Broad has launched a national effort to improve public schools by hiring business leaders rather than educators to run schools (Weinberg, 2003). He has even founded his own national superintendent’s academy to train future school leaders in efficient business methods (Riley, 2009). Such non-educator superintendents have earned the sobriquet “gunslingers” because they are likened to US marshals riding into towns corrupted by villains and which need to be cleaned up “ruthlessly” (Eisinger and Hula, 2008).

Our next step was to examine the preparation curriculum of business leaders in global elite business schools and in the top-ranked US programmes preparing educational leaders, mostly the US school superintendents. What we were interested in is how (or if) business schools dealt with non-rational elements of decision making in pursuing an MBA degree and, concomitantly, how the US schools of education similarly prepare educational leaders. We think that this is a viable comparison as many top-rated universities in the USA are offering education students courses in business schools and at least one national report has recommended that the EdD (doctor of education degree) be replaced by the MBA degree (Levine, 2005). The putative reputation of business schools for solving problems in private sector settings has been accentuated by the “great men” success stories of their leaders such as Jack Welch of General Electric (O’Boyle, 1988) or Lou Gerstner of IBM (Gerstner, 2002, 2008). Business leaders are the ones appointed by presidents to solve problems with public sector services (Grace, 1984) as well as determine what is wrong and needs to be done to improve public education (*Wall Street Journal*, 2008) despite the fact that business schools have their own history of failure (Jacobs, 2009; Khurana, 2007). In examining course titles from business schools we adopted the perspective that there was a good deal of the “hidden curriculum” in them, what Bernstein (1990, p. 30) has called “tacit practice.”

Table I shows the top 11 global business school MBA-required courses. The ranking is derived from Bickerstaff’s (2002) *Which MBA? A Critical Guide to the World’s Best MBAs* published by *The Economist* magazine. The data in Table I show the overwhelming preponderance of economic analyzes, mathematical approaches to decision making, and financial accounting and marketing calculations. The emphasis is on management

Rank	School	Country	Required programmes/courses (some are shorter than semesters and do not include electives)
1	Kellogg (Northwestern)	USA	Accounting for Decision Making; Mathematical Methods for Management Decisions; Business Strategy; Strategies for Leading and Managing Organizations; Statistical Methods for Management Decisions; Finance; Microeconomic Analysis; Marketing Management; Operations Management
2	Tuck (Dartmouth)	USA	Financial Management, Analysis and Reporting; Leading Organizations; Statistics for Managers; Decision Science; Global Economics for Managers 1 and 2; Capital Markets; Tuck Leadership Forum; Global and Competitive Strategy; Marketing; Corporate Finance; Tuck General Management Forum: Project; Strategic Analysis of Technology Systems; Operation Management
3	Fuqua (Duke)	USA	Managerial Effectiveness; Managerial Economics; Probability and Statistics; Computer Skills; Marketing Management; Global Financial Management; Financial Accounting; Informing and Influencing Business Audiences; Operations Management; Decision Models; Managerial Accounting; Global Economic Environment of the Firm; Professional Project Communication
4	Chicago	USA	Leadership Effectiveness and Development; Microeconomics; Financial Accounting; Statistics; Financial Management; Human Resource Management; Macroeconomics; Managerial Accounting; Marketing Management; Operations Management; Strategic Management; Managerial and Organizational Behavior
5	Stanford	USA	Data and Decisions; Dynamics of Organizations; Financial Accounting; Managerial Economics; Modeling and Analysis; Organizational Behavior; Finance; Management in an Information Age; Marketing Management; Operations; Strategy in Business Environments; Human Resource Management; Managerial Accounting; Strategy and Organization in the Global Economy
6	Columbia	USA	Creating Effective Organizations; Corporate Finance; Decision Models; Financial Accounting; The Global Economic Environment; Leadership; Managerial Accounting; Managerial Economics; Managerial Statistics; Managing Marketing Programs; Marketing Strategy; Operations Management; Strategy Formulation
7	Anderson (UCLA)	USA	Management Foundations; Data Analysis, Statistics and Decision Making; Managerial Economics; Business Strategy; Managerial Finance; Managing Human Resources in Organizations; Operations and Technology Management; Elements of Marketing; Management Field Study

Table I.
(The) Economist's global ranking of MBA programmes with identification of required or core courses

(continued)

Rank	School	Country	Required programmes/courses (some are shorter than semesters and do not include electives)	Logic/emotion binary
8	IMD	Switzerland	Leadership Experiences; Accounting; Economics; Finance; Industry Analysis; Marketing; Operations; Organizational Behavior; Political Economy; Strategy; Dynamic Learning Networks; Entrepreneurship-Venture Projects; On-Campus Company Presentations	<hr/> 565 <hr/>
9	Darden (Virginia)	USA	Accounting; Business and Political Economy; Ethics; Finance; Management Communication; Marketing; Operations; Organizational Behavior; Quantitative Analysis; Strategy	
10	Yale	USA	Financial Accounting; Financial Reporting of Managerial Controls; Data Analysis 1: Probability Modeling and Statistical Estimating; Data Analysis 11: Hypothesis Testing and Regression; Economic Analysis; Decision Analysis and Game Theory; The Strategic Environment of Management; Leadership; The Politics of Strategic Management or Designing and Managing Organizations; Marketing Management; Operations Management; Valuation and Investment; Corporate Finance and Options	
11	Henley	UK	Foundations of Management; Managing Information; Managing People; Managing Marketing; Managing Performance; Managing Financial Resources; Strategic Direction; Business Transformation	

Source: Bickerstaffe (2002)

Table I.

of information and people and control of both human and material resources. To develop at least a preliminary estimate of the nature of the typical business school curriculum, we consulted sources that indicate the general nature of the content (Bickerstaff, 2002) or what Khurana (2007) has called its “cognitive exclusiveness” (p. 82). Nowhere in the course offerings (as evidenced by their titles) is there an emphasis on non-rational aspects of business such as working in different cultures that are not amenable to Western game theory calculus. We note that business schools have not been able to significantly increase the number of women in their MBA programmes. The percentage of women in US MBA programmes has been between 25 and 35 percent for many years (Alsop, 2007, p. B6). In an interview with Elissa Ellis-Sangster, Executive Director of the Forte Foundation in Austin, Texas, an organization dedicated to increasing the number of women in MBA programmes, Alsop (2007, p. B6) quoted her as saying:

Liberal arts women who are good at speaking and writing are often advised to go to law school. When they think about business school, they worry about the quantitative challenges.

Another example of the confrontation between normative decision theory and the non-rational world is represented in the book *The Myth of the Rational Voter* by Caplan (2007). Caplan is an economist who finds that democracy and rational economic thinking do not match. Caplan (2007) found in the “unwisdom of crowds” that “voters [. . .] are not just ignorant in the sense of having insufficient information. They actually hold wrong-headed and damaging beliefs about how the economy works” (Casse, 2007, p. D5).

Academics call such problems “rational ignorance” (Casse, 2007, p. D5). While this may be the case, we might inquire, “Where in the preparation of business leaders or economists do we help them learn what can’t be calculable?”

When business leaders or leaders prepared in business enter educational systems, they encounter another form of non-rational world. For example, in lamenting the loss of a Stanford-prepared MBA who “lost” his battle with the Oakland, California school system bureaucracy, the resigned budget director commented that rules about budget transfers set by state law prevented him from shifting textbook monies to salaries, something that could be done in the world of for profit business activities but was not allowed in educational systems. Union work rules prevented flexibility in transferring teachers from one site to another or in paying them on the basis of “merit,” and boards of education knew less than the professional staff but had the final say on such matters (Riley, 2007, p. W13). Clearly the emphasis on normative choice theory in the Stanford Business School did not match the “rationality” of school system operations which, if not rational, had a different form of rationality than taught in an MBA programme.

Our examination of the preparation curricula for US educational leaders earning a doctorate (either an EdD or PhD) in the top-ranked educational leadership programmes is shown in Table II. Whilst it is acknowledged that the content of such programmes will be more complex and nuanced than their titles might suggest, we nonetheless assumed some symmetry between a course title and course content. Where available, we were also able to examine the actual course syllabi when they were posted on university web sites. This review revealed only a smattering of preparation content not amenable to rational choice theory approaches. Such areas would include politics and culture, ethics, spirituality, and morality. In only one top-ranked programme did we find web site information that showed a strong emphasis on the non-rational aspects of leadership in education (the University of Washington).

Problems of rational choice theory in other professions: medical education

Groopman (2007) contrasts the decision situations required of medical doctors and how they are prepared in medical school. He notes that in medical school great time is spent in reviewing data which leads to a diagnosis. But his explorations show that in real medical situations doctors do not think like economists:

Physicians at bedside do not collect a great deal of data and then leisurely generate hypotheses about possible diagnoses. Rather, physicians begin to think of diagnoses from the first moment they meet a patient (p. 35).

Groopman indicates that the discrepancy between preparation and practice also brings to the fore the situation in medicine in which the existing knowledge base is simply inadequate to confront many medical problems. The doctor is, therefore, bound to face a situation in which his/her training simply does not prepare in any way for such limitations. He indicates that medical school curricula and medical preparation confront such ambiguities by creating a culture of “conformity and orthodoxy” (2007, p. 153). In turn, this leaves doctors blind to their own emotions as a factor in their decision making. However, the lack of training in how to deal with their emotions and feelings has become a weakness in prompting medical practitioners to assess their own errors:

Disclosing uncertainty and error will demand a deep change in medicine’s attitude toward emotion. Most physicians fail to recognize, let alone analyze, their own emotional states in

Rank	School	EdD	PhD	Licensure	Illustrative courses
1	University of Wisconsin-Madison	X	X	X (some)	ELPA 725 (Research Methods and Procedures in Educational Administration); ELPA 940 (Contemporary Issues of School Leadership); ELPA 830 (Financing Elementary and Secondary Education); ELPA 860 (Organizational Theory and Behavior in Education); ELPA 900 (Field Experience in Educational Administration); ELPA 826 (Evaluation for Administrative Decision Making in Education); ELPA 845 (The School Principalship); ELPA 940 (Randomized Trials to Inform Education Policy); ELPA 940 (Advanced Law and Ethics for School Leaders); ELPA 840 (Public School Law); ELPA 875 (Theory and Practice of Educational Planning); ELPA 848 (Professional Development and Organizational Learning); ELPA 940 (Legal Aspects Charter Schools and School Choice); ELPA 824 (Field Research Designs and Methodologies in Educational Administration); EA 846 (The School Superintendency); EA 870 (Politics of Education); EA 940 (Nexus Between Administrative Work and Outcomes-Based Results); EA 940 <i>Spirituality Centered Leadership</i>); Learning and Instruction; Leadership Theory and Behavior; Decision Analysis I: Logic of Scientific Inquiry; Decision Analysis II: Quantitative Analysis; Decision Analysis III: Qualitative Analysis; Decision Analysis IV: Education Policy and Program Evaluation; Comparative Issues in Education; Context of Educational Leadership and Policy; Instructional Leadership and Educational Reform; Resource Allocation and Deployment; Educational Accountability and Assessment; School Organization and Schooling; Politics and Governance; K-12 Education Law; Diverse Learners and At-Risk Students; Teachers and Teaching
2	Vanderbilt	X		X (some)	Integrating Perspectives on Education (spans history, philosophy, theories, and current controversies in five concentrations) for eight credits; five courses in research methods or research intensive courses
3	Harvard	X		X	EDUC 250 A (Inquiry and Measurement in Education); EDUC 311X (first-year doctoral seminar: Introduction to Research); EDUC 160 (Introduction to Statistical Methods in Education); six to eight credits in either Normative Studies; Professional Practice; Inquiry Skills; Behavioral Sciences; Also one course in economics; sociology/organizations; policy; history. Stanford also joint a degree (EdD/MBA) with the School of Business
4	Stanford		X	X (some)	For the PhD in Educational Policy and Planning: 338V (Ethics); 378Q (Systems of Human Inquiry); 388M (<i>Social/Culture Contexts</i>); 388P (Educational Politics/Policy); 395 (Poverty and Educational Policy); 383 (Foundations of Educational Policy); 381P (Quantitative Research); 388 (Educational Economics and Finance); 395 (Policy Implementation); 395 (Conflicts of Law/School Law); 381Q (Qualitative Research); 383 (Advanced Quantitative Research); 383S (Advanced Qualitative Research); 383M (Organizational Design and Behavior); 395 (Critical Policy Analysis); 395 (Policy Issues in Data-Based Decision Making); 395 (Policy Research Problems); 395 Advanced Policy Latino Education
5	University of Texas-Austin		X	X (some)	

(continued)

Table II.
The 2007 US News and World Report rankings of educational administration and supervision specialty area in the USA and illustrative courses for the doctorate and/or/superintendent's licensure

Table II.

Rank	School	EdD	PhD	Licensure	Illustrative courses
6	Penn State	X		X	EDLDR 576 (The Law and Education); EDLDR 578 (Schools as Organizations); EDLDR 573 (Public School Finance); EDLDR 571 (Educational Facilities Planning); EDLDR 569 (Decision Making in Educational Organizations); EDLDR 574 (Theory and Current Issues In Public Bargaining); EDLDR 579 (Public School Business Administration); EDLDR 580 (The Use of Theory in Educational Administration); EDLDR 581 (Field Research in Educational Leadership); EDLDR 583 (Current Administrative Practice); EDLDR 584 (Evaluation in Educational Organizations); EDLDR 565 (Personnel Management and Contract Administration); EDLDR 563 (Designing Staff Development Programs); EDLDR 551 (Curriculum Design: Theory and Practice); EDLDR 540 (The Politics of Local School Districts); EDLDR 540 (Microcomputer Applications in Educational Leadership) ORLA 4010 (Introduction to Organization and Change Theory in Education); ORLA 4044 (Transforming and Transforming Education); ORLA 4086 (Law and Educational Institutions: Issues of Authority, Religion, Free Speech, and Safety); ORLA 5016 (Law and Educational Institutions: Equity Issues); ORLA 5025 (Ecology of Educational Planning and Management); ORLA 5029 (Supervision of Teaching and Learning); ORLA 6460 (Internship)
7	Teachers College, Columbia		X	X (some)	EAD 940 (Organizational Analysis of Education); EAD 951B (Planning Change in K-12 Schools); EAD 941 (Administrative Behavior in Educational Organizations); EAD 950 A (Proseminar in K-12 Educational Administration, i.e. influence of research on leadership practice); EAD 950B (Synthesis and Analysis of Disciplinary Perspectives of K-12 Educational Leadership and Management); CEP 930 (Educational Inquiry); EDU PandL 959 (Organizational Theory); EDU PandL 960 (Personality, Ego Development and Leadership); EDU PandL 961 (Social and Political Contexts of Education); EDU PandL 913 (Leadership in Educational Administration); EDU PandL 916 (Data Based Decision Making in Educational Administration); EDU PandL 971 (Legal Research in Educational Administration); <i>one course on multicultural education</i> ; two foundations courses; four courses in research methodology; a 12-hour cognate
8	Michigan State		X	X	EDUC 684 (Statistical Analysis of Educational Data 1); EDUC 831 (School Law); EDUC 832 (Educational Politics and Policy); EDUC 833 (Leading System Functions); EDUC 834 (Organizational Behavior and Theory in Education); EDUC 835 (Instructional Leadership for Supervision, Curriculum and Technology); EDUC 836 (School Finance and Economic Equity); <i>EDUC 837 (Cultural Aspects of Leadership and Instruction in School Reform)</i> ; EDUC 981 (Field Techniques in Educational Research); <i>EDUC 840 (Advanced Leadership Theories)</i> ; EDUC 841 (Development of a Research Proposal); EDUC 844 (Advanced Seminar and Supervised Internship in Educational Administration)
9	Ohio State		X	X	EDUC 790 (Fundamental Issues in Educational Studies); EDUC 791 (Foundations of Teaching and Learning); EDUC 792 (Methods in Educational Research: Qualitative); EDUD 793 (Introduction to Quantitative Methods in Educational Research); EDUC 888 (Professional Development Seminar); EDUC 751 (<i>The Social Context of Schooling</i>); EDUC 752 (Organizational Theory and Research in Education); EDUC 753 (Analysis of School Effectiveness); EDUC 754 (Education and Public Policy);
10	University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	X		X	
11	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor		X	X (some)	

(continued)

Rank	School	EdD	PhD	Licensure	Illustrative courses
12	USC	X		X	EDUC 522 (Challenges in Urban Education: Accountability); <i>EDUC 523 (Challenges in Urban Diversity: Diversity)</i> ; EDUC 524 (Challenges in Urban Education: Leadership); EDUC 525 (Challenges in Urban Education: Learning); EDPA 613: (Policies and Politics of Educational Governance); EDPA 615 (Economics of Education); EDUC 536 (Inquiry Methods II); EDPA 610 (Management of Human Resources); EDUC 792 (Critique of Research); EDPA 618 (Seminar in the Superintendency)
13	Indiana University-Bloomington	X		X	A510 (School-Community Relations); A608 (Legal Perspectives on Education); A630 (Economic Dimensions of Education); A635 (Public School Budgeting and Accounting); A638 (Public School Personnel Management); A640 (Planning Educational Facilities); A515 (Educational Leadership: Teacher Development and Evaluation); J630 (Curriculum Theory and Practice); A560 (Political Perspectives of Education); A653 (Organizational Context of Education); A671 (Planning and Change in Educational Organization); <i>A672 (Moral Dimensions of Leadership)</i>
14	University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign	X		X	EOL 546 (Public School Finance); EOL 561 (Education Politics and Policy); EOL 590 (Leadership and Ethics); EOL 543 (School Improvement); EOL 545 (Economics of Education); EOL 567 (Program Planning and Evaluation); EOL 544 (School District Improvement); EOL 547 (Educational Law); EOL 561 (Educational Politics and Policies); <i>EOL 548 (Politics and Cultural Context of Education)</i> ; EOL 562 (School District Management); EOL 563 (The School Superintendency); EOL 565 (Human Resource Management); <i>EOL 564 (Democracy and Politics)</i> ;

(continued)

Table II.

Table II.

Rank	School	EdD	PhD	Licensure	Illustrative courses
15	University of Washington	X		X	EDLPS 510 (School Finance); EDLPS 511 (School-Community Relations); EDLPS 512 (Seminar in Personnel Administration and Development); EDLPS 513 (Seminar in Instructional Development and Supervision); EDLPS 514 (Washington School Law); EDLPS 515 (Management of Labor Relations in Education); EDLPS 516 (Special Education and the Law); EDLPS 517 (Seminar in Administration: Facilities); EDLPS 518 (Reflective Seminar: The Superintendent); <i>EDLPS 520 (Education as a Moral Endeavor)</i> ; EDLPS 521 (Philosophy of Education); EDLPS 526 (Educational Inquiry); EDLPS 530 (History of Education); EDLPS 545 (Knowledge and Data in Relation to Action); EDLPS 546 (Leadership Inquiry I: The Design of Research on Local Problems of Practice); EDLPS 547 (Leadership Inquiry II: Developing Useful Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence); EDLPS 548 (Leadership Inquiry III: Refining the Design and Analysis of Research That Informs Practice); EDLPS 550 (The Dynamics of Educational Organizations); EDLPS 551 (Foundational Studies in Complex Organizations); EDLPS 552 (Organizational Change in Education); EDLPS 553 (Human Resources in Educational Organizations); EDLPS 554 (Foundations I: Leading for Learning in Complex Educational Systems); <i>EDLPS 555 (Foundations II: Moral and Historical Contexts for the Leadership of Complex Educational Systems)</i> ; EDLPS 556 (Foundations III: The Dynamics of Organizations, Policy, and Systems Change); EDLPS Foundations IV: Fiscal and Legal Contexts for Leadership of Complex Educational Systems); EDLPS 560 (Perspectives on Policy and Policy Making in Education); EDLPS 561 (Education Policies and Leadership in Political Context); EDLPS 562 (American School Law); EDLPS 563 (Education, The Workforce, and Public Policy); EDLPS 564 (Seminar in Economics of Education); EDLPS 564 (Seminar in Economics of Education); EDLPS 565 Power and Politics in Organizational Leadership and Decision Making); EDLPS 566 (Education Policy Serving Disenfranchised Groups); EDLPS 567 (Education Policy and the Improvement of Teaching and Learning); EDLPS 568 (Policy Evaluation in Education); EDLPS 569 (Issues in P-12 School Reform); EDLPS 571 (Instructional Renewal and the Achievement Gap); EDLPS 572 (Teaching, Learning, and Instructional Renewal in the Context of Learner Differences);

Note: Possible non-rational choice theory-centered courses are italicized

Sources: 2008 Edition US News and World Report (2007), "America's Best Graduate Schools"; (1) University of Wisconsin-Madison, available at: www.education.wisc.edu/elpa/academics/syllabi.html (accessed July 3, 2007); (2) Vanderbilt University, available at: <http://pebody.vanderbilt.edu/x3807/xml> (accessed July 3, 2007); (3) Harvard University, available at: www.gse.harvard.edu/academics/masters/sp/index.html (accessed July 3, 2007); (4) Stanford University, available at: <http://ed.stanford.edu/suse/programmes-degrees/apa.html> (accessed July 3, 2007); (5) University of Texas at Austin, available at: <http://edadmin.edb.utexas.edu> (accessed July 3, 2007); (6) Pennsylvania State University, available at: www.ed.psu.edu/edldr (accessed July 3, 2007); (7) Teachers College, Columbia University, available at: www.tc.edu/oandl/ed-leadership/concentrations (accessed July 10, 2007); (8) Michigan State University, available at: www.reg.msu.edu/ead/K-12PHD.htm (accessed July 11, 2007); (9) The Ohio State University, available at: http://ehc.osu.edu/ep/EA_PhDCurriculum.htm (accessed July 11, 2007); (10) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, available at: http://soe.unc.edu/academics/edd_edleadership/pos.php (accessed July 3, 2007); (11) The University of Michigan, available at: www.soc.umich.edu/edadm/nistration/courses/requirements/doctoral/index.html (accessed July 4, 2007); (12) The University of Southern California, available at: www.usc.edu/dept/education/academic/edd/curriculum_core.htm (accessed July 11, 2007); (13) Indiana University-Bloomington, available at: www.indiana.edu/~educlead/certif.html (accessed July 4, 2007); (14) The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, available at: www.ed.uiuc.edu/eol/ers (accessed July 11, 2007); (15) The University of Washington, available at: www.washington.edu/students/crs/cats/edlp.html (accessed July 4, 2007)

clinical encounters. This repression of feeling misses an important variable in the assessment of a patient's experiences and outcome. The emotional temperature of the doctor plays a substantial part in diagnostic failure and success. (Horton, 2007, p. 18)

Groopman (2010) has also criticised the influence of behavioral economics on medical practices because it:

[...] did not distinguish between medical practices that can be standardized and not significantly altered by the condition of the individual patient, and those that must be adapted to a particular person.

571

He concluded his review of the attempt to identify "best practices" as "scientifically misconceived" (p. 13).

We next moved to see how actual educational leaders fared in the conduct of their work in educational institutions. We were aware that there already was a huge reservoir of literature on administrative decision making (Alexis and Wilson, 1967; Boone, 2006; Bridges *et al.*, 1971; Mulkeen *et al.*, 1986; Sutherland, 1977; Taylor, 1984) and heuristics (Davis, 2004; Forgas, 2001; Perrow, 1979). But we were curious to know how these apparent gaps in preparation might be manifested in live educational settings along the lines that Groopman (2007, 2010) had identified in the field of medicine.

De-constructing the logic/emotion binary

We therefore set out to perform some very preliminary interviewing of educational leaders in the USA and the UK. In doing so, we were conducting an investigation in the form of a non-probability, convenience sample, that is, no hypotheses were being tested. Such research has been termed "theoretical" or "purposive" by Mason (1996). As for sample size, no preconceived size was employed because in the type of research methodology used one stops interviewing when "your data stop telling you anything new about the social process under scrutiny" (Mason, 1996, p. 97). In this preliminary investigation our total respondents were 13 middle-level managers from the USA and the UK – four men and nine women, representing eight different institutions in higher education (English and Bolton, 2008).

We were also guided by the perspectives of Douglass and Moustakas (1985, p. 44) who said about the type of research we employed:

It is self-directed, self-motivated, and open to spontaneous shift. It defies the shackles of convention and tradition [...] It pushes beyond the known, the expected, or the merely possible. Without the restraining leash of formal hypotheses, and from external methodological structures that limit awareness or channel it, the one who searches [...] may draw upon the perceptual powers afford by [...] direct experience.

The data derived from these interviews show that educational decision makers interviewed in both nations juxtaposed the types and kinds of decisions they made on the job and continuously balanced factors of risk, certainty/un-certainty, and emotionality. Here are some of the illustrative comments made during those interviews in both countries:

- "I go with my gut a lot of the time. Afterwards I reflect on it."
- "How do you know it's a good decision? Feedback from other people. It feels good inside. All of that feels right."

- “Every decision makes me uncomfortable. I’m naturally emotional. I overtly identify.”
- “It’s an emotional reaction. A tension you feel between what you want to do and what somebody else wants you to do. It’s the tension. I find it hard to deal with.”
- “I’m constantly weighing. I’m keeping my passions in check.”
- “I’ve resurrected myself in so many ways.”
- “Leadership is this internal drive. I don’t know what the hell I was doing. I only had common sense. All sense is not common.”
- “I’ve come to learn about confidence. It’s when to draw our sword or not. You choose one’s battles. I try to think about if my ego is involved.”
- “We’re always emotional. We act in emotion. I try to act out of the emotion. I’m steeped in emotion. Every decision is always sitting on top of the emotion. The wrong decisions of life are made in a state of emotion. My emotions today may not be my emotions tomorrow.”
- “Strong personalities at play every day in many ways. It’s growing a new skin. I can feel my body tension.”
- “I’m constantly weighing and navigating how much I make suggestions or how strong, sometimes with passion and ideas. In this role I must be restrained. I’m not there to redo the politics of the college.”

We found that when uncertainty was high in confronting a decision event, emotionality and risk became very evident to a decision maker to the point where he/she:

- retraced a decision already made in light of new information and reversed or modified it;
- slowed up the decision-making process so as to more carefully consider each step which was leading to a specific decisions; or
- deferred the decision by kicking the problem upstairs or lodging it in a committee.

While not making a decision is considered non-rational in many models of decision making (Cunningham and Cordeiro, 2000; Hanson, 1985; Hoy and Tarter, 1995, p. 4; Owens, 1981, p. 321; Vroom and Jago, 1988), we found in our model that this choice was quite rational and made sense.

From these data we constructed a schematic of decision making that helped us understand how these educational decision makers were engaging in rendering a decision in the context in which they functioned (Figure 1).

The schematic indicates that the perception of an event is the *locus* for engaging in a decision. The decision maker comes to this event in a mood, a general state as opposed to a specific reaction to a state, and balances a decision between certainty and risk interspersed with emotion that waxes and wanes with how severe the consequences of a decision may be to himself/herself and how vulnerable he/she may be as a result.

The schematic indicates that three common types of decisions are possible. The first is simply to make a decision that may or may not involve a heuristic (short cut). The second is to make no decision by passing it onto to someone else known as “passing the buck.” The third is to delay a decision by continuing to search for additional solutions.

The option of “passing the buck” we have called a “circuit breaker” because it removes the individual from the decision-making cycle and it ends the process of looking for a solution from the individual’s perspective. However, this tactic may be a form of organizational sub-optimisation because it is denied a decision at the level where it should be made and overburdens the next level of decision makers. Our schematic also shows that the result of the decision process is a decision and we do not consider the results of that decision. Our work continues to be about the types and kinds of decisions produced from the decision process, irrespective of their results. Our perspective is that viewing decisions apart from their results brings the decision-making process into much sharper focus.

Towards a new understanding of emotion in decision making in educational leadership

While continuing our research on the role of emotion in decision making in educational leadership, we have begun to understand that a consideration of emotion has a legitimate place in the preparation of leaders as a factor in decision making (Damasio, 1994). However, the dictates of normative decision theory that have for so long dominated preparation programmes in business and education contain curricula that may not include emotion because its lack of reliability just does not fit in the equation for marketplace predictability. We think this is a serious flaw in both normative decision theory and programmes based on it. If normative decision theory does not at least include the possibility that the world is not completely rational, then rationality itself may not be rational. Marglin (2009, p. B10) has called economics a:

[...] two-faced discipline. It claims to be a science, describing the world without preconception or value judgment. . . [and within that notion is] the self-interested individual – who rationally calculates how to achieve ever more consumption, whose conception of community is limited to the nation-state-is a myth, not exactly false but a half-truth at best.

However, as Marglin (2009) underscores in his criticism, the framework of normative science “is maintained even when it gets in the way of understanding how the economy really works” (p. B10).

Plott (1990) argues that one of the problems with normative decision theory is that it does not recognise that the rationality of markets is different than the rationality of individuals engaged in decision making. This distinction, which Plott (1990) calls the issue of different “levels of analysis” is an important marker in our own work.

Finally, what we see is the clear limitations of normative decision theory as completely adequate in dealing with issues regarding leadership preparation. The first test of

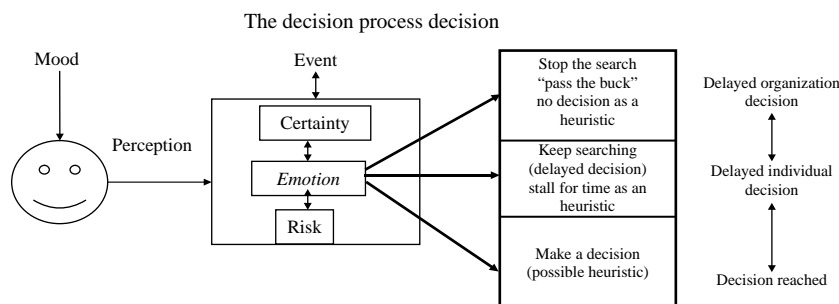


Figure 1.
Basic schematic
of proposal; to study
dimensions of educational
decision making

rationality is that one cannot control that which one does not understand. It seems to us that it is supremely rational to understand that even rationality has limits for as Gandhi once observed, “[...] if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also” (Iyer, 1973, p. 287). Before we offer some concluding comments about the situations faced by educational leaders and the formal curricula that exist in most educational preparation programmes we have listed, and with which we are familiar, we explore the nature of emotional intelligence.

How do the findings differ from emotional intelligence?

Goleman’s (1998) notion of emotional intelligence differs from the preliminary findings in this study. He defines emotional intelligence as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p. 317).

Goleman’s work is different than say that of Panksepp (1994) who said “emotions reflect the intense arousal of brain systems that strongly encourage organisms to active impulsively” (p. 86). He leans heavily towards dispositions and acquisitions and does not cleanly separate out, for example, the distinction between moods and emotions. He also discusses “being in control of your moods [...] as essential to good communication” (p. 176). These observations are mostly common sense bromides. Emotional intelligence is simply an undifferentiated way to talk about emotions in the workplace. Here is a more finely tuned definition of the difference between mood and emotion by Linnebrink and Pintrich (2004):

Moods and emotions are distinct in terms of intensity and duration. Moods tend to be longer lasting than emotions, which are characterized by short, intense episodes. However, while emotions tend to be intense or rather short-lived, they may also fade into general mood states over time [...] mood states do not have a particular reference; the source of the mood is unclear. In contrast, emotions tend to be a reaction or response to a particular event or person. (p. 58)

Frijda (2007) has stipulated that the nature and intensity of emotion depend on the relationship between an event and some frame of reference with which the event is compared. It is not the magnitude of the event that decides the emotion, but its magnitude relative to that frame of reference. The frame of reference is often the prevailing state of affairs. Perhaps the most salient for us in our preliminary work is not whether emotions were present, because we found evidence that they were always present in some form, but the *relationship* of emotion to the other two factors we have identified, that is, risk and certainty (or uncertainty).

Conclusion

The study reported here was not initially undertaken to determine the place of emotion in the work place. Rather, it was undertaken as a search for the use of heuristics in decision making. What was discovered was that in the data gathered emotion, or what we termed the level of emotionality, present in the answers of our respondents was connected to a perception of risk and uncertainty. Our respondents were able to separate how they felt from their general mood or what Panksepp (1994) calls “temperament,” the “long-term emotional traits of an individual” (p. 87). Our work did not deal with how emotions worked, only that they were present nearly all the time in decision making.

We have argued that normative decision theory anchored in economics has established a discursive practice in the preparation of educational leaders that is itself inadequate.

At the nexus of an economic discourse is the aim to negate that which is neither predictable nor controllable within game theory and market place ideologies. Since culture itself is not rational, models centered on economic theory are blind to cultural traditions and implications. We can restore the inclusion of emotion in decision making when it is recast as normal instead of being cast out as a form of a structured silence in the false binary with logic. We believe that educational leadership curricula should similarly be recast to be more inclusive of the role of emotion as a response to a decision event, and as an interactive element in the life of an individual decision maker balancing risk and certainty/uncertainty as he/she makes sense of the world and his/her role in organizational relationships.

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