



The Relationship Between Decision Making and Leadership Responsibility in The Campus Environment

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in the campus environment plays an important role in shaping organizational culture and supporting the development of students as future leaders. One of the competencies required in leadership is the ability to make decisions effectively, which must go hand in hand with a sense of moral and social responsibility. This study aims to analyze the relationship between decision-making skills and leadership responsibility in the context of campus organizations. This study uses the Systematic Literature Review method by examining various scientific publications that discuss decision making, leadership ethics, member participation, and student leader accountability. The results of the study indicate that decisions based on ethical considerations, rational analysis, and the involvement of organizational members tend to result in higher leadership responsibility. In addition, leaders who involve members in the decision-making process are able to build organizational trust and improve the effectiveness of internal communication. These findings confirm that wise decision-making is a key factor in shaping campus leaders who are integrity, transparent, and capable of creating a collaborative organizational environment. This research contributes to the development of literature on student leadership by highlighting the importance of integrating decision-making processes and leadership responsibility in supporting the achievement of organizational goals.

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1. Introduction

Leadership in the campus environment has an important function in shaping academic organizational culture and impacting the development of students as the next generation. Campus leaders are not only tasked with managing and directing organizational activities, but are also expected to create an atmosphere that supports students in learning, interacting, and developing themselves. Decision-making ability is a key factor because every decision made directly affects organizational dynamics, member relationships, and the effectiveness of the programs implemented. Recent studies confirm that decision-making competence is fundamental in developing trustworthy student leadership. McNair, Albertine, McDonald, and Major Jr. (2022) argue that decision-making skills are critical to fostering leadership that is

both effective and credible in the context of student affairs. Their research highlights how student leaders who are trained in sound decision-making practices are better able to navigate complex challenges, act with integrity, and earn the trust of their peers. The authors emphasize that student success is deeply connected to leadership that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the decision-making process. By empowering students with the tools and frameworks to make thoughtful, ethical decisions, institutions can cultivate a generation of student leaders who not only excel academically but also lead with credibility and responsibility.

Universities are complex social spaces where students are involved in various academic, organizational, and service activities. Student leaders such as student organization chairs, BEM chairs, and activity coordinators play a crucial role in determining organizational direction. This shows that decisions must be based not only on logic but also on moral responsibility. Research shows that moral responsibility strongly influences how decisions are perceived by members and how leaders maintain legitimacy. Ballangrud and Aas (2022) emphasize that ethical thinking in leadership, particularly in professional learning communities, is essential for fostering trust and maintaining legitimacy. Their study highlights that when leaders approach decision-making with a strong ethical framework, it not only enhances the transparency of their decisions but also ensures that these decisions are perceived as just and fair by the members. This, in turn, helps in building and sustaining the legitimacy of the leaders. The authors argue that the moral responsibility of leaders is crucial in maintaining a positive organizational climate, as it aligns the decision-making process with the core values of the community, fostering greater cooperation and commitment from all involved.

The social conditions of students today show that they tend to be more critical, open, and active in expressing their opinions. Campus leaders who apply an authoritarian approach often find it difficult to build trust and collaboration, as rigid top-down structures tend to reduce communication openness and weaken member participation (Chan & Ho, 2021; Gomez & Alvarado, 2022). In addition, transparent leadership enhances credibility and prevents internal conflict, especially in organizations with increasingly diverse members. Hadziahmetovic and Salihovic (2022) emphasize that transparent communication within leadership practices helps to build trust among employees and reduces misunderstandings. Their study highlights that when leaders openly share information and decisions with their teams, it fosters a sense of inclusivity and respect. This is particularly important in diverse organizational settings, where varying perspectives can lead to conflict if not managed effectively. Transparent leadership not only improves employee engagement but also helps prevent the emergence of internal conflicts by ensuring that all members feel valued and informed. This approach aligns team goals and enhances the overall cohesion of the organization. Recent studies also show that campus organizations thrive when leaders adopt ethical and participatory leadership models emphasizing empathy, transparency, and collective decision-making (Anderson & Gupta, 2022; Farley, 2024).

Ethics and social responsibility are important aspects of leadership on campus. Leaders with high moral awareness usually make more ethical decisions and have a positive impact on the organizational environment. This is in line with research showing that ethical leadership among students significantly improves communication climate and conflict resolution. Blaich, Kenny, and Jimenez (2023) demonstrated that when students engage in ethical leadership practices, it leads to a more open and constructive communication environment. Their study highlights how students who practice ethical leadership are more likely to promote transparent dialogue, foster mutual respect, and resolve conflicts effectively. The research emphasizes that ethical leadership within student bodies not only enhances interpersonal communication but also contributes to a more harmonious and collaborative learning atmosphere. These outcomes

suggest that integrating ethical leadership training into student development programs could lead to significant improvements in both communication and conflict resolution skills.

However, not all student leaders can account for the decisions they make. Many campus organizations encounter problems such as lack of coordination, low member participation, internal conflicts, and misinformation due to decisions that do not involve many parties. This situation shows that decision-making ability and leadership responsibility are two interconnected aspects of campus leadership. Research indicates that leaders who apply structured reasoning, ethical considerations, and inclusive frameworks tend to exhibit higher accountability. Dunn (2025) emphasizes that decision-making in leadership, especially within professional settings such as nursing, must integrate ethical and social considerations, particularly regarding class, gender, and organizational structures. This broader approach not only enhances accountability but also aligns leadership with values of fairness and equity. Similarly, Littman, Ortega-Williams, and Beltrán (2023) argue that the application of participatory action research (PAR) principles in academic leadership fosters accountability by encouraging inclusive decision-making processes that challenge traditional hierarchies and promote shared leadership. Their work highlights that when leaders incorporate diverse perspectives and engage in collaborative decision-making, they not only enhance their ethical responsibility but also create more sustainable and transparent organizational structures. Moreover, responsible decision-making plays a significant role in reducing resistance among members and enhancing organizational stability. According to Culipei (2022), youth leaders who exhibit responsible decision-making practices contribute positively to the sustainability of leadership within organizations. Culipei's research highlights that effective decision-making, especially when involving youth leaders, encourages active participation and collective problem-solving, which reduces internal resistance and fosters a cooperative environment. This in turn strengthens the overall stability of the organization by promoting shared values and aligned goals. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating youth perspectives in leadership roles, which not only enhances decision-making processes but also cultivates a sense of ownership and responsibility among team members, leading to a more stable organizational structure (Culipei, 2022).

Although many studies have reviewed leadership in higher education, research specifically examining the relationship between decision-making skills and leadership responsibility remains limited. Recent studies of youth leadership also highlight the lack of frameworks integrating decision-making with accountability. Ugwuozor and Mbaji (2024) emphasize that many youth leadership models fail to effectively connect decision-making processes with mechanisms for holding leaders accountable. Their research shows that while youth leaders are often expected to make decisions, there is a notable gap in the structures that ensure these decisions are made with responsibility and transparency. The study reveals that youth organizations can benefit from developing frameworks that link decision-making directly with accountability measures, enabling leaders to not only make decisions but also justify and stand by them. This approach not only fosters trust within the organization but also enhances the overall effectiveness and legitimacy of youth leadership.

This gap emphasizes the need for deeper exploration of how student leaders take responsibility for their decisions, especially when those decisions influence organizational performance, member engagement, and organizational sustainability.

2. Methodology

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a qualitative approach. The SLR method ensures that the synthesis is comprehensive and credible, following widely accepted academic steps (Snyder, 2022). Recent SLR studies on youth and campus

leadership show that qualitative synthesis is effective for understanding behavior in voluntary organizations. As noted by Mugabirwe and Muhumuza (2025), the use of systematic literature reviews (SLR) is crucial in exploring the dynamics of leadership and innovation within educational contexts, especially in vocational education. Their study highlights the importance of integrating creativity and innovation in vocational training, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where developing leadership skills in youth is essential for fostering sustainable and effective educational practices. By synthesizing qualitative data, their research emphasizes how leadership training programs can enhance creativity, innovation, and skills development, providing valuable insights into the behaviors of individuals involved in voluntary and educational organizations.

2.1 Type and Approach of Research

This research is qualitative in nature, using a systematic literature review method. This approach emphasizes the collection and analysis of data in the form of scientific documents such as journal articles, books, research reports, and other academic publications related to student leadership, decision-making processes, organizational ethics, and leadership responsibility.

2.2 Data Sources

The data in this study were sourced from:

1. National and international scientific journals, that discuss decision making, student leadership, accountability, and organizational ethics.
2. Books and academic literature, relevant to leadership theory, decision-making theory, and the concept of moral responsibility.
3. Review articles or literature reviews, that provide a conceptual basis related to research variables.

Literature selection is carried out by considering the relevance and credibility of the sources.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out in several stages:

1. Identification of keywords, such as: "campus leadership", "decision making," "Leader responsibility", "student leadership," "leadership accountability," and "organizational decision-making."
2. Literature search in databases such as: Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, and reputable national journals.
3. Literature selection based on inclusion criteria: discusses research variables, published between 2013 and 2025, available in full-text form, originating from scientific journals and publishers.
4. Screening of literature to eliminate duplicate or irrelevant articles.

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis with the following steps:

1. Data reduction
Each article is summarized based on the research method, object, main findings, and relevance to the topic.
2. Data categorization
Findings were grouped into themes such as: student leader decision-making, leadership responsibility, ethics in leadership, member participation, organizational accountability.

3. Narrative synthesis
 Researchers compare findings across articles to identify patterns of relationships, similarities, or differences in previous research results.
4. Drawing conclusions
 Conclusions are drawn based on patterns emerging from the literature to explain the relationship between decision-making abilities and leadership responsibility on campus.

2.5 Data Validity

To ensure data validity, researchers conducted:

1. Triangulation of sources through the use of various journals and literature,
2. Validated findings by comparing several research results,
3. Examined the credibility of the literature, especially reputable journals.

This validity ensures that the results of data synthesis are scientifically accountable.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 General Findings

A synthesis of more than 20 relevant articles indicates several recurring themes related to decision-making and leadership responsibility in campus settings. These themes include rational analysis, ethical foundations, participatory practices, communication processes, and delegation mechanisms.

Table 1. Summarizes the main themes and findings

Main Theme	Summary of Findings
Rational Decisions and Accountability	Susanto's (2016) research shows a positive relationship between rational decision-making and increased leadership accountability. Leaders who make decisions through careful analysis tend to be more accountable for their actions to members of the organization.
Participatory Leadership Style	Leadership that involves members in the decision-making process has been proven to strengthen a sense of shared responsibility. Member participation in deliberations and discussions increases their sense of ownership of the decisions made.
Philosophical and Ethical Foundations	Decision-making by educational leaders based on religious, philosophical, psychological, and sociological values strengthens the moral dimension of leadership. Decisions are not only technical, but also ethical and responsible.
Decision-Making Process and Communication	The decision-making process, which includes gathering information, analyzing alternatives, and open communication, affects the level of trust and accountability of leaders. Transparency in explaining the reasons for decisions strengthens the legitimacy of leaders.

Delegation and Responsibility	Although some decisions are delegated to members, the main responsibility remains with the leader. Delegation does not eliminate the leader's obligation to be accountable for decisions made within the organizational structure.
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3.2 Decision-Making and Accountability

Rational and data driven decisions enhance leadership credibility and organizational conformity. Leaders who apply structured reasoning are more capable of justifying policies, evaluating alternatives systematically, and ensuring that decisions align with organizational values and long-term goals. Rational decision-making also minimizes cognitive bias, emotional judgment, and impulsive actions that often lead to conflict or resistance among members (Watson & Pierce, 2022). In campus organizations, where decisions often influence academic programs, member participation, and activity management, the ability to make well-informed decisions reinforces the perception that leaders are competent and trustworthy. This is consistent with research indicating that rational decision frameworks strengthen legitimacy and reduce ambiguity in student organizational governance. Sarid (2024) argues that applying rational decision-making frameworks in school leadership not only enhances the legitimacy of the leadership but also minimizes uncertainty within the governance structure. By integrating rational deliberation, leaders can address complex challenges while ensuring transparency and fairness. Sarid emphasizes that such frameworks provide a clear structure for decision-making, making it easier for stakeholders to understand and trust the decisions being made. This approach fosters a more inclusive environment where decisions are seen as legitimate and well-supported, ultimately contributing to more effective governance in student organizations.

Accountability becomes stronger when decision-making is transparent and supported by clear evidence and logical justification. Leaders who openly communicate their reasoning processes, acknowledge potential risks, and involve relevant stakeholders tend to build higher levels of organizational trust and shared ownership. Studies show that transparent decision-making practices encourage members to accept outcomes more willingly, even when decisions are difficult or involve compromise. Haniff and Daya (2023) argue that transparent leadership, particularly in the context of student leadership, plays a crucial role in enhancing acceptance of decisions. Their research suggests that when student leaders practice transparent decision-making, it fosters an environment of trust and mutual respect. By openly communicating the reasons behind difficult decisions or compromises, leaders can help members understand the necessity of the choices, even when they are not ideal. This approach not only promotes acceptance but also strengthens commitment to collective goals, as members feel included in the process and confident in the leadership. Furthermore, accountability is reinforced when leaders are willing to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions both positive and negative and demonstrate consistency between their words and actions. This alignment between decision-making and responsibility is a key indicator of ethical leadership and contributes to long-term organizational stability. Cox, Ansari, and McLaughlin (2021) emphasize the importance of integrating ethical frameworks into decision-making processes, particularly in high-stakes environments such as public health and education. Their study on COVID-19 testing programs in higher education institutions demonstrates that when decision-making is guided by clear ethical principles, it not only promotes trust and accountability but also ensures that decisions made during crises contribute to long-term stability and cohesion. The authors highlight that organizations that prioritize ethical responsibility in their decision-making processes are better equipped to navigate challenges, maintain integrity, and foster a culture of shared accountability, all of which are crucial for sustained organizational success.

3.3 Member Participation and Shared Responsibility

Participatory leadership strengthens collective responsibility and member commitment. Student organizations with inclusive decision systems report higher motivation, ownership, and group cohesion. As noted by Ningsih and Paramitha (2025), student involvement in democratic leadership processes, such as in OSIS (Student Council), significantly enhances their engagement and sense of responsibility. This participatory approach encourages students to take ownership of their roles, leading to greater group cohesion and collective motivation. Similarly, Sanda (2025) emphasizes the importance of leadership at the institutional level, highlighting that effective leadership, including inclusive decision-making, plays a critical role in shaping the success and cohesion of educational organizations. The study suggests that fostering a culture of collaboration and shared decision-making within schools not only improves organizational effectiveness but also strengthens the bond between students and their institutions. This finding is aligned with recent research indicating that involvement in decision-making increases member retention and reduces turnover in student communities. As highlighted by Rahman, Dibya, Islam, and Farooqi (2025), participatory governance in educational settings such as student councils or committees can enhance engagement and motivation. Their study explores the role of managerialism and participatory dynamics in reshaping education, particularly through the lens of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. They argue that empowering students with decision-making responsibilities not only fosters a sense of belonging but also contributes to improved retention rates. This model of governance helps students feel more connected to their academic communities, resulting in a more sustainable and productive educational environment.

3.4 Ethical Values in Leadership

Ethical reasoning ensures decisions are logical, fair, and morally grounded. Leaders who prioritize integrity and justice enhance trust and organizational climate. Beyhan, Akcomak, and Cetindamar (2024) highlight that organizations, including technology-based accelerators, gain legitimacy through ethical practices and transparency, which ultimately build trust and foster positive organizational climates. Their research shows that when leaders act with integrity, especially in nascent organizations, they create an environment where stakeholders feel valued and engaged, leading to long-term success. Similarly, Ryazanova and McNamara (2024) explore legitimacy tensions in societal impact governance, noting that ethical decision-making is crucial in navigating these tensions. They argue that leaders who balance fairness, ethical responsibility, and transparency not only strengthen trust but also enhance the overall organizational climate, ensuring sustainability in the face of challenges. Recent studies further demonstrate that ethical leadership reduces misinformation and strengthens student trust in organizational governance. As McGowan (2025) notes, ethical communication plays a pivotal role in fostering trust within organizations. By prioritizing transparency and responsibility, ethical leadership helps mitigate the spread of misinformation, which can undermine trust and cohesion among members. In the context of student organizations, implementing ethical leadership practices not only enhances communication but also creates a culture of openness and integrity. McGowan (2025) argues that promoting such ethical frameworks, particularly in settings involving complex information dynamics, empowers students to engage in more responsible decision-making and builds long-term trust in the governance of their organizations.

3.5 Delegation, Oversight, and Responsibility

Delegation supports capacity-building but does not eliminate leaders' core responsibility for organizational outcomes. Oversight, reporting, and evaluation mechanisms are essential to maintaining accountability (Northouse, 2025). Research on youth organizations also indicates

that effective delegation is associated with higher productivity and improved peer collaboration. Limo and Mureithi (2023) found that delegation within leadership roles, particularly in youth organizations, directly influences employee productivity by promoting greater engagement and efficiency among team members. Their study in the NOREB counties of Kenya highlighted that when leaders delegate tasks appropriately, it fosters an environment of trust and responsibility, which in turn enhances overall team productivity. Similarly, Addo-Fordwuor and Addo (2024) emphasize that delegation is a strategic tool in educational leadership, particularly in schools, where delegating authority allows leaders to focus on critical decision-making while empowering subordinates. Their research shows that when authority is delegated, it not only boosts productivity but also strengthens collaboration among peers, as individuals feel more responsible and engaged in their tasks. These studies underscore the importance of delegation in fostering a collaborative and productive organizational environment, particularly in youth leadership contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that effective decision-making is closely linked to leadership responsibility within campus organizations. Leaders who make decisions rationally, ethically, and transparently foster trust, enhance communication clarity, and strengthen organizational order. Leadership responsibility is reflected through consistent actions, fairness, and readiness to accept the consequences of decisions. Therefore, decision quality and leadership responsibility must function as integrated components in shaping competent, ethical, and accountable student leadership.

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