

GROUP DECISION MAKING — NOTES (Psychology, UG Sem II)

1. Meaning of Group Decision Making

Group decision making refers to the process where two or more individuals come together to analyze a problem, evaluate alternatives, and choose a solution. It is based on interaction, discussion, and consensus rather than an individual acting alone.

2. Characteristics

- *Collective contribution – Inputs from multiple members
- *Shared responsibility – Everyone owns the decision
- *Interaction & communication – Discussion is central
- *Presence of group norms – Decisions follow group rules
- *Possibility of conflict – Differences of opinion may arise
- *Potential for creativity – More ideas than an individual can generate

3. Advantages of Group Decision Making

1. Greater knowledge pool – More information and expertise
2. More ideas – Helps in creative and innovative solutions
3. Acceptance of decisions – Members feel involved, so they support outcomes
4. Reduction of bias – One person's bias can be balanced by others
5. Better evaluation – Alternatives are examined from many perspectives

4. Disadvantages

1. Time-consuming – Discussion and coordination take longer
2. Groupthink – Pressure to agree can reduce critical thinking
3. Conflict – Differences can create tensions
4. Diffusion of responsibility – No one person feels accountable
5. Dominance by a few members – Strong personalities may influence decisions

5. Processes Involved in Group Decision Making

1. Problem Identification – Recognizing the issue
2. Analysis – Understanding causes and consequences
3. Generating Alternatives – Brainstorming solutions
4. Evaluation of Alternatives – Pros and cons
5. Choosing the Best Solution – Through consensus, vote, or leader choice
6. Implementation – Putting the decision into action
7. Follow-up – Reviewing effectiveness

6. Group Decision-Making Techniques

A. Brainstorming

- * Focus on idea generation
- * No criticism allowed
- * Encourages creativity
- * Works best for new/unstructured problems

B. Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

- * Members write ideas silently
- * Ideas are read and listed
- * Group discusses and ranks them
- * Reduces dominance and increases equal participation

C. Delphi Technique

- * Used with experts
- * Anonymous written responses
- * Multiple rounds of feedback
- * Reduces pressure, ideal for forecasting

D. Group Discussion / Consensus

- * Members talk openly
- * Try to reach common agreement
- * Builds commitment

E. Voting / Majority Rule

- * Quick method
- * Used when consensus is difficult

7. Factors Affecting Group Decision Quality

- *Group size – Too large = confusion; too small = fewer ideas
- *Group cohesion – Very high cohesion may lead to groupthink
- *Leadership style – Autocratic vs democratic
- *Communication patterns – Open, supportive communication helps
- *Group diversity – Differing skills and perspectives improve decisions

8. Common Problems in Group Decision Making

A. Groupthink

Unanimity is valued more than realistic evaluation.
Occurs when groups are too cohesive or under pressure.

Symptoms:

- * Illusion of invulnerability
- * Pressure on dissenters
- * Self-censorship
- * Belief in group superiority

B. Social Loafing

Members put in less effort when working in a group than alone.

C. Risky Shift / Group Polarization

Group tends to make more extreme decisions than individuals would.

9. Improving Group Decision Making

- * Encourage open communication
- * Allow dissent and critical evaluation
- * Use structured techniques (NGT, Delphi)
- * Assign a "devil's advocate"
- * Maintain moderate group size
- * Promote equal participation

10. Summary

Group decision making is a collaborative problem-solving process influenced by group dynamics.

It has significant advantages in creativity and information sharing, but also risks such as groupthink and dominance.

Using structured techniques improves decision quality. .