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Investigating the influence of leadership styles on decision-making: An empirical study in Maghnia's Educational Institutions, Algeria

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Abstract---This study examines how leadership styles influence decision-making in educational institutions in Maghnia, Algeria. Drawing on established theoretical frameworks, it focuses on three main styles—democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire—and their impact on institutional outcomes. A descriptive-analytical method was employed, administering surveys to 170 employees (managers, professors, administrative staff) across ten institutions; 154 valid responses were analyzed with SPSS V27. Findings reveal a predominance of democratic leadership, which significantly enhances decision-making through inclusive participation and collaboration. Autocratic leadership showed limited influence, whereas laissez-faire leadership demonstrated moderate but statistically significant effects, contingent on appropriate delegation and oversight. These results highlight the need for leadership flexibility and situational adaptation. The study recommends fostering participatory management, prudent delegation of authority, and enhanced employee involvement in

decision-making, thereby creating a supportive climate that strengthens institutional performance and promotes sustainable development. Ultimately, these insights offer both theoretical and managerial implications for optimizing leadership practices in the educational sector.

Keywords---Leadership Styles, Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Decision-Making

JEL Codes: I20, M10, O15

1. Introduction

In contemporary organizational discourse, leadership and decision-making are frequently cited as the linchpins that differentiate thriving institutions from those that stagnate. Within educational contexts—where pedagogical imperatives, resource constraints, and administrative pressures converge—effective leadership becomes even more critical. For a manager to excel as a leader, mere possession of formal authority is insufficient; rather, it is the adeptness in motivating faculty and staff, orchestrating collective efforts, and making judicious decisions that determines institutional success.

Notwithstanding the extensive body of work on leadership—estimated to encompass thousands of studies and myriad theoretical paradigms—a persistent gap remains regarding how leadership styles specifically shape decision-making in Algerian educational contexts. Many existing investigations have chiefly concentrated on corporate environments or broadly international samples, often neglecting the unique cultural and structural features intrinsic to Algerian educational institutions (Al-Daibat, 2017; Brahim et al., 2015; Mennaa & Belhadj, 2024). Although recent inquiries—such as (Amos et al., 2022) in Tanzanian schools—underscore the significance of participatory leadership, direct analogies to the Algerian setting require caution due to contextual differences. Likewise, Bouherar and Salem (2025) highlight a deficiency in localized data, underscoring the influence of cultural norms and administrative practices on leadership efficacy. Consequently, an empirical examination of diverse leadership styles—democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire—and their potential to enhance or hinder decision-making processes in Maghnia’s educational sector is warranted. By centering on this underexplored locale, the current study aims to illuminate how contextually attuned leadership frameworks may address the idiosyncratic challenges faced by Algerian educational institutions, thereby enriching the broader discourse on effective educational management in the region.

Moreover, the importance of undertaking such an investigation cannot be overstated, given the central role effective management plays in advancing educational quality. The interplay between leadership practices and decision-making can profoundly shape teacher motivation, administrative coherence, and the alignment of institutional goals. By focusing on Maghnia’s educational institutions, this study offers a nuanced perspective on how culturally responsive leadership approaches may bolster staff engagement and student outcomes alike,

ultimately contributing to broader conversations on educational improvement and policy development in Algeria and beyond.

Against this backdrop, the present study poses a central question: **Do various leadership styles significantly contribute to decision-making efficacy in Algerian educational institutions?** To address this inquiry, two principal hypotheses are proposed: first, that the democratic style predominates among the institutions surveyed; and second, that leadership styles, taken collectively, exert a statistically significant influence on the quality and efficiency of decision-making. Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive-analytical design. Quantitative data were collected via questionnaires distributed to professors, managers, and support staff within ten educational institutions in Maghnia. Out of 170 distributed questionnaires, 154 valid responses were analyzed using SPSS V27, facilitating both exploratory and inferential statistical assessments.

The overarching objective is to delineate how leadership styles intersect with decision-making, with a view to offering actionable recommendations for institutional leaders. Additionally, this research aspires to bridge a critical gap in the literature by situating leadership theory within an Algerian educational context, thereby enriching both the theoretical discourse and practical management strategies. Finally, this introduction paves the way for the subsequent sections of the study. First, a survey of relevant literature elucidates foundational concepts and empirical precedents. Next, the methodology section details the procedures and analytical tools employed. The findings and discussion follow, presenting quantitative results and situating them within existing research. The study concludes with recommendations for policy and practice, as well as proposals for future investigations in this domain.

2. Literature Review

Decision-making, often conceptualized as the systematic selection of a course of action from multiple alternatives to achieve specified objectives (Robbins et al., 2014), is a core managerial responsibility (Daft, 2015). Leaders substantially shape this process by determining the level of subordinate involvement, the speed of decision-making, and the degree of implementation efficiency (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Seminal theories categorize leadership as autocratic (centralized authority, minimal input), democratic (collaborative, shared decision-making), or laissez-faire (broad delegation, minimal oversight) (Lewin et al., 1939), with each style demonstrating context-dependent efficacy.

Historically, the University of Iowa, Ohio State, and Michigan studies established the significance of participative leadership for robust decision-making outcomes. Lewin et al. (1939) found that groups led democratically reported higher productivity and satisfaction compared to those under autocratic leadership, which, while occasionally effective for rapid results, often strained relationships. The Ohio State studies then emphasized a balance between task-orientation (initiating structure) and people-orientation (consideration) as the optimal environment for decision-making (Fleishman, 1953; Halpin & Winer, 1957). Meanwhile, the Michigan studies highlighted employee-oriented leadership, wherein supportive, trust-based interactions facilitated more open dialogue,

producing stronger buy-in for decisions (Likert, 1961). Taken collectively, these foundational insights suggest that leadership styles prioritizing participation and alignment with employee needs generally yield better decision quality and greater commitment to implementing chosen solutions.

Recent scholarship underscores the pivotal role leadership styles play in shaping decision-making processes within schools, revealing both cross-contextual parallels and region-specific nuances (Belcher & Yang, 2020). Louis et al. (2010) examined primary schools and found that democratic leadership significantly fosters teacher cohesion and consensus-building, whereas autocratic and laissez-faire approaches yielded negligible effects on staff unity. Similarly, Ellis et al. (2024), investigating multiple secondary schools, identified collaborative decision-making as a linchpin for boosting teacher morale and successful reform implementation—particularly in under-resourced settings where stakeholder involvement is vital. Moreover, analyses of Algerian higher education reforms by Zouaoui (2019) illustrate that centralized, autocratic decision-making frequently hinders faculty participation and stifles policy coherence, mirroring Miliani (2021) assertion that opaque, top-down governance impedes effective reform in universities.

Despite these indications that collaborative leadership is generally beneficial, some scholars note potential advantages of laissez-faire practices in certain contexts for instance, (Adams, 2024; Anderson, 2024; Carter, 2024), argue that delegative leadership might foster innovation among highly skilled teachers who thrive on autonomy. However, evidence from other Algerian cases suggests that minimal oversight can devolve into unclear objectives and limited accountability, undermining broader institutional goals.

Empirical findings outside Algeria reinforce these observations. A quantitative study in Egyptian governmental universities (Said-Hung & Aslam, 2024) revealed that democratic and mild autocratic styles can effectively yield timely decisions in bureaucratic structures, while pure laissez-faire leadership often results in insufficient oversight. Similar patterns emerged in Pakistan, where democratic leadership had the strongest positive impact on both teacher motivation and school performance, followed by autocratic styles, with laissez-faire trailing markedly behind (Kyambade et al., 2024). In parallel, recent meta-analyses integrate these heterogeneous findings (Ellis et al., 2024; Kausar et al., 2024; Koeswayo et al., 2024).

These insights resonate with Algerian research, wherein centralized governance is frequently linked to low faculty involvement. Collectively, the scholarship points to three overarching trends. First, democratic leadership is consistently correlated with higher staff motivation, shared ownership, and more effective decision-making. Second, while autocratic leadership may occasionally prove useful for swift action, it risks engendering negative repercussions—such as lower morale—if it persists without integrating stakeholder input. Third, laissez-faire approaches appear least supportive of sustained organizational success, unless they are carefully calibrated to a context of highly skilled, self-motivated teams.

Nonetheless, a key gap persists in understanding how these styles function interactively in Algerian educational settings, particularly within smaller cities like Maghnia. Although emerging studies highlight the promise of participation-driven leadership, there is insufficient empirical evidence clarifying how these diverse styles intersect with local institutional culture and resource constraints. Consequently, the present research endeavors to fill this void by systematically examining how leadership styles influence decision-making efficacy in Maghnia's educational sector, thereby extending the evidence base required to inform policy and practice at both local and national levels.

3. Data & Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study investigates the influence of leadership styles—democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire—on decision-making processes in Algerian secondary schools, particularly within Maghnia's educational institutions. Although the relationship between leadership styles and decision-making has been explored internationally, the Algerian educational context remains under-researched. The research addresses this gap by examining the extent to which leadership styles contribute to decision-making efficacy in this specific setting. The research adopted a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach is well-suited to examining the relationship between leadership styles and decision-making without manipulating variables. The study focused on observing, describing, and analyzing the leadership practices in Maghnia's educational institutions to draw meaningful conclusions. The study targeted employees in ten educational institutions in Maghnia, including teachers, administrative staff, and managers. A total of 170 questionnaires were distributed, with 154 valid responses analyzed. The study population included all employees—teachers, administrators, and managers—within educational institutions in the Tlemcen region, specifically in Maghnia.

The study tests two primary hypotheses:

- **H1:** The democratic leadership style is the most commonly adopted in the Algerian educational institutions under study.
- **H2:** Leadership styles (democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire) have a statistically significant effect on decision-making quality and effectiveness.

3.2 Data Collection

The study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. This questionnaire consisted of three sections: the first section gathered demographic data on the participants; the second section contained 24 statements that examined leadership styles—eight for democratic leadership, eight for autocratic leadership, and eight for laissez-faire leadership; and the third section assessed employees' resistance to organizational decisions through an additional eight items. All statements utilized a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The scale was further divided into categories from very low (1–1.80) to very high (4.21–5.00) to facilitate a clear interpretation of participant agreement levels.

The collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS V27. The analysis began with descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) to summarize the data and understand the general trends.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Findings

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the empirical data, commencing with a rigorous evaluation of the questionnaire's reliability and validity metrics. Employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methodologies, the analysis elucidates the intricate relationships between leadership styles and decision-making processes within Algerian educational institutions. Through systematically tabulated results and statistically robust measures, the prevalence of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles was quantified and their differential impacts on decision-making outcomes were critically assessed. Furthermore, the findings offer nuanced insights into demographic variables and their correlation with respondents' perceptions of leadership effectiveness, thereby laying a solid foundation for the ensuing discussion and conclusion.

4.1.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Results

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
1	Leadership styles	0.907
2	Decision making	0.826
3	Total	0.906

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

Table 1 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients calculated to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire's constructs. The results indicate a high degree of reliability, with an overall alpha of 0.906. The dimension related to leadership styles achieved a notably high coefficient of 0.907, underscoring the consistency of the scale items used to measure this construct. Similarly, the decision-making dimension yielded a coefficient of 0.826, which, while slightly lower, remains above the generally accepted threshold of 0.60 for exploratory research and the commonly used 0.70 benchmark for established scales. These findings confirm that the questionnaire items are not only stable but also sufficiently consistent in capturing the underlying constructs of leadership styles and decision-making processes.

Table 2: Validity Testing Results

<i>Test</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Significance (Sig.)</i>
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Measure	0.814	—
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square	542.22	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The validity of the instrument was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity in Table 2. The KMO value was 0.814, indicating that the sampling adequacy was meritorious and that the data were well-suited for factor analysis. Bartlett's test yielded a Chi-square value of 542.22 and a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the correlation matrix significantly deviates from an identity matrix. These results suggest that the questionnaire exhibits strong validity and that the variables are interrelated enough to justify further statistical analyses.

4.1.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3: Distribution of the Sample according to Personal Information

Personal Information Job	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	80	51.9
	Female	74	48.1
	Total	154	100
Age	From 25 to 32	40	26
	From 33 to 45	81	52.6
	46 years and ab	33	21.4
	Total	154	100
Educational Qualification	Secondary	18	11.7
	Bachelor's	83	53.9
	Master's	53	34.4
	Total	154	100
Seniority/Experience	Less than 5 year	55	35.7
	From 5 to 10 yea	43	27.9
	From 11 to 15 ye	32	20.8
	15 years and abo	24	15.6
	Total	154	100
Title/Position	Director	19	12.3
	Professor	95	61.7
	Administrative st	40	26
		154	100

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The table above shows that 51.9% of the surveyed individuals are male, while the female category represents 48.1% of the sample, indicating a relatively small difference in these percentages. Regarding the age factor, the age group of 33 to 45 years old was the highest, at 52.6%, followed by the 25 to 32 years old group at 26%. This slight variation suggests that the educational institutions have a young and active human resource base. Additionally, the surveyed employees have a high educational level, with 53.9% holding a university diploma (bachelor's degree), while only 11.7% have a secondary level education. Furthermore, the largest percentage of respondents, 35.7%, have less than 5 years of experience, followed by 27.9% with 5 to 10 years of experience, and only 15.6% have more than 15 years of experience. Overall, the data suggests that the educational institutions have a well-educated and relatively young workforce, with a mix of experienced and less experienced employees.

4.1.3. Descriptive Analysis of Survey Responses

Table 4: Democratic Leadership Style

Statement	Rank	Std. Dev.	Mean	Trend
The director leaves the space for employees to express their opinions...	1	1.023	3.623	High
The director leaves as much freedom as possible for employees...	6	0.949	3.435	High
The director empathizes with each employee during their struggles...	3	0.943	3.623	High
The director encourages employees and involves them in discussions...	5	0.984	3.805	High
The director delegates authority to subordinates to share in decisions.	8	1.079	3.461	High
The director encourages employees to innovate and be creative...	2	1.043	3.779	High
The director takes into account employees' abilities when assigning tasks.	4	1.011	3.753	High
The director involves employees in the planning process.	7	1.096	3.558	High
Democratic Leadership Style		0.735	3.629	High (Overall)

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The results in Table 4 demonstrate that the democratic leadership style received consistently high scores across multiple indicators, with an overall mean of 3.629. Respondents agreed that democratic leaders foster participation, empathy, and innovation while respecting employees' abilities and involving them in both planning and decision-making. This trend suggests that democratic leadership positively influences organizational dynamics, aligning with theories that highlight participative leadership as key to enhancing employee engagement and organizational performance.

Table 5: Autocratic Leadership Style

Statement	Rank	Std. Dev.	Mean	Trend
The manager issues orders and insists on their implementation.	5	1.210	3.266	Medium
The manager asks for suggestions but makes decisions alone.	3	1.252	3.292	Medium
The manager focuses on criticism without addressing problems.	4	1.536	3.279	Medium

Statement	Rank	Std. Dev.	Mean	Trend
The manager is strict with employees.	1	1.156	3.510	High
The manager retains all powers, delegating none.	7	1.315	3.142	Medium
The manager believes employees lack capacity for responsibility.	8	1.189	3.103	Medium
The manager enforces their opinion, rejecting opposition.	2	1.500	3.298	Medium
The manager plans alone without employee input.	6	1.396	3.155	Medium
Autocratic Leadership Style		1.024	3.256	Medium (Overall)

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The Table 5 reflects a moderate application of autocratic leadership within the surveyed institutions. While certain items, such as strictness, scored higher, others—such as retaining all authority or dismissing employees' suggestions—indicate mixed responses. The overall mean of 3.256 suggests that autocratic leadership is not dominant but is occasionally applied in specific situations. This approach, while potentially effective in emergencies or when dealing with inexperienced staff, may not foster long-term employee engagement or innovation.

Table 6: Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Statement	Rank	Std. Dev.	Mean	Trend
The manager delegates authority extensively.	1	1.329	3.337	Medium
The manager avoids problems rather than addressing them.	4	1.430	3.077	Medium
The manager does not interfere in employees' affairs.	6	1.349	2.662	Medium
The manager gives freedom without expecting follow-up.	5	1.299	2.941	Medium
The manager hesitates in decision-making.	8	1.384	2.276	Low
The manager relies on employees for decisions without directing them.	3	1.192	3.168	Medium
The manager provides only minimal supervision.	7	1.221	2.545	Low
The manager grants complete freedom to employees.	2	1.108	3.214	Medium
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style		0.957	2.961	Medium (Overall)

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The responses in Table 6 show a moderate tendency toward laissez-faire leadership, with an overall mean of 2.961. While some items, such as delegating authority, scored higher, others—such as avoiding problems and minimal supervision—showed lower averages. This suggests that while some employees

appreciate autonomy, the absence of structured guidance and decision-making may lead to inconsistency and unclear accountability. In practice, the laissez-faire approach may benefit highly skilled, self-driven employees but can hinder overall organizational performance if applied indiscriminately.

Table 7: Decision-Making

Statement	Rank	Std. Dev.	Mean	Trend
The administration motivates employees to share ideas for new decisions.	5	1.001	3.642	High
Employees feel satisfied and follow decisions.	6	0.833	3.545	High
Managers and employees communicate regularly about changes.	4	1.034	3.675	High
Decisions come with clear, pre-announced justifications.	7	1.099	3.402	High
Applying new decisions improves outcomes.	3	0.979	3.691	High
Changes are necessary to improve the institution's situation.	1	0.905	3.948	High
Employees accept changes if consulted first.	8	1.243	2.694	Moderate
Involving employees in decisions leads to success.	2	0.970	3.928	High
Decision-Making		0.682	3.566	High (Overall)

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

Table 7 illustrates that decision-making processes within the institutions are generally viewed positively. High means across several items suggest that employees feel their input is valued, and clear communication enhances their acceptance of organizational changes. This strong perception of inclusiveness and transparency in decision-making is likely linked to higher employee morale and improved organizational outcomes. However, the slightly lower score for pre-consultation indicates room for improvement in ensuring all employees feel consulted before changes are implemented.

4.1.4. Testing the hypotheses

Table 8: Normal Distribution Test Results

Dimension	Sig. Value	Z-Value
Leadership Styles in the Organization	0.155	0.524
Employees' Resistance to Decisions	0.254	0.612
Questionnaire as a Whole	0.115	0.514

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in Table 8 indicate that the dataset adheres to the assumption of normality, as evidenced by significance values (p-

values) exceeding the commonly used threshold of 0.05. This validation of normal distribution ensures that subsequent parametric analyses, including regression and hypothesis testing, can be conducted with greater confidence in their statistical validity. The normality of the data underpins the robustness of the inferential findings, facilitating the extraction of reliable insights regarding the relationships between leadership styles and decision-making processes.

Table 9: Ranking of Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Relative Weight (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Application Level
Democratic Leadership	72.58%	3.629	0.735	High
Autocratic Leadership	65.12%	3.256	1.024	Medium
Laissez-Faire Leadership	59.22%	2.961	0.957	Medium

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The ranking of leadership styles in Table 9 underscores the prominence of democratic leadership within the surveyed institutions. With a relative weight of 72.58%, this approach not only exhibits the highest mean score but also reflects a consistently high level of application. By fostering open communication, collaboration, and employee engagement, democratic leadership stands out as the most effective and widely adopted strategy. In contrast, both autocratic and laissez-faire styles, while present, demonstrate moderate levels of application and lower relative weights. This distribution supports the hypothesis that democratic leadership is the dominant style within Algerian educational institutions, aligning with best practices that emphasize inclusivity and shared decision-making.

Table 10: Overall Impact of Leadership Styles on Decision-Making

Statistic	Value
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.319
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	0.102
F-Value (Calculated)	17.278
Significance Level (p)	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

The regression analysis in Table 10 reveals a statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and decision-making outcomes ($p < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.319$) indicates a moderate positive relationship, while the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.102$) suggests that approximately 10.2% of the variability in decision-making can be attributed to leadership styles. This finding highlights the critical role that leadership approaches play in shaping institutional decision-making processes. The statistically significant F-value (17.278) further confirms that leadership styles are not only relevant but also influential predictors of decision-making effectiveness within the studied educational institutions.

Table 11: Effects of Each Leadership Style on Decision-Making

Leadership Style	t-Value	F-Value	R ²	Beta	Sig. Level
Democratic Leadership	4.945	23.825	0.139	0.346	0.000
Autocratic Leadership	1.896	3.593	0.023	0.101	0.060
Laissez-Faire Leadership	3.064	9.389	0.058	0.172	0.003

Source: Prepared by the researcher, based on SPSS 27 outputs.

Among the leadership styles examined in Table 11, democratic leadership emerges as the most impactful on decision-making, as evidenced by its significant t-value (4.945), substantial beta coefficient (0.346), and highest coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.139$). This indicates that democratic leadership accounts for a notable proportion of the variability in decision-making and underscores its value in promoting inclusive, well-informed decisions. Laissez-faire leadership also demonstrates a significant, albeit smaller, influence, with a t-value of 3.064 and $R^2 = 0.058$. Conversely, autocratic leadership does not exhibit a statistically significant effect, as its p-value (0.060) exceeds the threshold of 0.05. These results suggest that participatory and empowering leadership approaches are more conducive to fostering effective decision-making processes in Algerian educational institutions, whereas authoritarian strategies appear less impactful.

4.2. Discussions

The results of this study indicate that democratic leadership style is significantly associated with more effective and inclusive decision-making in Algerian educational institutions, whereas autocratic leadership shows a weaker positive influence and laissez-faire style the least influence. This pattern aligns with established leadership theories and prior empirical findings. For example, Lewin's classic framework identified democratic (participative) leadership as most effective in eliciting high-quality group performance (Lewin, 2023). Contemporary studies in educational settings similarly report that democratic leadership yields stronger positive outcomes than autocratic or laissez-faire approaches (Maqbool et al., 2024). In one recent Algerian study, only the democratic style of school principals had a significant positive effect (on teacher group cohesion), while authoritarian and delegative (laissez-faire) styles showed no such benefit (Lakhdar et al., 2024). These convergences suggest that the participative decision-making inherent in democratic leadership is a robust facilitator of better outcomes, reinforcing its prominence in leadership theory and supporting its relevance in the Algerian educational context.

Comparing the three leadership styles reveals distinct influences on decision-making processes. Democratic leadership involves stakeholders in deliberation and **shared governance**, often leading to well-rounded decisions that consider multiple perspectives. Such participative decisions tend to be of higher quality and enjoy broader acceptance among staff. Autocratic leadership, in contrast, centralizes authority and allows the leader to make decisions unilaterally. This top-down approach can yield quick decisions and maintain order – a potential advantage in time-sensitive situations but it often comes at the cost of creativity and buy-in. Researchers have found that decision-making is **less creative under autocratic leaders**, and staff may resist or feel alienated by decisions imposed

without their input (Kausar et al., 2024). Laissez-faire (delegative) leadership minimizes the leader's involvement in decision-making, essentially leaving decisions to the group. While this freedom might work with highly self-motivated and expert teams, in educational institutions it generally leads to ambiguity and poor coordination. Lewin's early experiments showed that laissez-faire groups were the **least productive**, with members lacking direction and cooperation (Maqbool et al., 2024). In school settings, such a hands-off style is characterized by a lack of clear decision procedures and low efficiency in reaching conclusions, though it may somewhat reduce overt conflict in the short term by avoiding direct confrontations (Bwalya, 2023). Overall, the comparative evidence underscores that a **democratic approach facilitates collaborative decision-making**, autocratic style can expedite decisions but risks low acceptance, and laissez-faire often hampers decision coherence and accountability.

The findings carry important practical implications for leadership in Algerian educational institutions. Foremost, they highlight the benefits of adopting a more democratic leadership approach in schools and universities. When leaders actively involve teachers and staff in decision-making, it **cultivates a sense of ownership and commitment** among stakeholders (Koeswayo et al., 2024). This collaborative environment can improve the implementation of decisions, as educators are more motivated to carry out policies they helped shape. By contrast, a continued reliance on autocratic practices may disengage staff; top-down decisions that disregard input can lower morale and reduce teachers' emotional investment in school initiatives.

Emphasizing democratic leadership is particularly advantageous in the Algerian context, where empowering educators could enhance the overall school climate. For instance, a field study in Algeria found that democratic principles achieved greater **teacher cohesion and teamwork** a crucial asset for consensus-driven decision processes. In practice, this means school leaders should be encouraged to hold open consultations, form committees that include teacher representatives, and facilitate regular forums for participative decision-making (**Lakhdar et al., 2024**). Such steps can translate the study's insights into a more engaged and effective educational workforce, ultimately benefiting student outcomes and institutional performance.

5. Conclusion

This research has explored the impact of leadership styles on decision-making within Algerian educational institutions. By examining democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership approaches, the study highlighted how these styles shape decision-making processes, staff engagement, and institutional outcomes.

The study's results indicate that democratic leadership is predominantly practiced within the surveyed Algerian educational institutions, where it has proven to foster more effective decision-making processes. Institutions led by democratic managers displayed higher levels of staff participation, enhanced morale, and improved implementation of decisions compared to those using autocratic or laissez-faire approaches. While autocratic leadership demonstrated limited effectiveness, primarily in contexts requiring swift and centralized

decision-making, its prolonged application was associated with reduced employee motivation and collaboration. Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, was found to be moderately effective when accompanied by clear guidelines and competent teams, though it generally resulted in lower oversight and weaker institutional coherence. Overall, the findings underscore the pivotal role that participative and inclusive leadership practices play in enhancing institutional decision-making and performance. Given these results, the study emphasizes the following recommendations for institutional leaders and policymakers:

- Foster a supportive, motivation-driven environment that reinforces the principles of democratic leadership, ensuring employees feel valued, empowered, and invested in the institution's mission.
- Prioritize addressing employee needs and aspirations without compromising institutional objectives. This balance is critical for cultivating a harmonious and productive workplace culture.
- Encourage leaders to responsibly delegate authority, enabling subordinates to actively participate in decision-making processes. Empowering staff not only increases trust and ownership but also enhances organizational resilience.
- Ensure that administrative leaders receive targeted training in strategic decision-making and advanced management practices, enabling them to navigate complex challenges with skill and foresight.

Future research should explore long-term effects of leadership styles on innovation, assess digital tools' impact on decision-making, and examine diverse educational contexts. Qualitative methods like interviews could enrich understanding of leadership and decision-making dynamics.

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