International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

Satisfactory Model in Decision Making in Educational Institutions: A Literature Review Study

Mahdini Al Ghifari [1*], Ratih Erissa Putri [2], Sapuani Muhajir [3], Salfen Hasri [4], Irawati [5]
[1-5] Islamic Education Management, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: **Mahdini Al Ghifari**

Abstract

Decision-making is a crucial aspect in the management of educational institutions because it has a direct effect on the effectiveness of the organization and the sustainability of the educational process. However, in practice, decision-making in educational institutions often takes place under conditions of limited information, time, resources, and structural and cultural pressures. This article aims to analyze the satisficing model in decision-making in educational institutions through a literature review approach. The method used is a literature study by examining relevant books and journal articles, both from national and international sources, related to decision-making theory and educational administration. The results of the study show that *the satisficing* model provides a realistic conceptual framework in explaining decision-making practices in educational institutions, where decisions are not always directed to the achievement of the most optimal solution, but rather to solutions that are considered adequate, acceptable, and implementable. This model, which is operationalized through *the decision-making action cycle*, has proven to be relevant to understand the dynamics of decision-making in Indonesian educational institutions faced with various limitations and complexities. Therefore, the *satisficing* model can be seen as a form of adaptive contextual rationality in educational leadership and management.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54660/.IJMRGE.2026.7.1.156-161

Introduction

Decision-making is the core of the management process in educational institutions because it is directly related to the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of all educational programs. In the context of schools, decision-making is not only about administrative and technical aspects, but also has far-reaching implications for the quality of the learning process, professionalism and teacher performance, as well as a conducive work climate. Appropriate and rational decisions can encourage the creation of effective learning, increase the motivation of all school residents, and ensure the optimal achievement of institutional goals. On the other hand, inappropriate decisions have the potential to cause various managerial problems that can hinder the quality of education and the sustainable development of schools.

Several studies confirm that proper decision-making is essential to improve the quality of formal education services in schools, where principals or leaders of educational institutions become central actors in every strategic and operational decision-making process (Harahap *et al*., 2025; Susanto, Syafruddin, & Abdullah, 2025) [6, 20]. Nevertheless, the decision-making process in educational institutions is often faced with various structural and contextual limitations, such as resource limitations, bureaucratic pressures, and the dynamics of internal organizational interests (Mulyasa, 2013) [12]. This condition requires school principals to have mature leadership, analysis, and ethical considerations so that every decision taken remains adaptive, participatory, and oriented towards improving the quality of education in a sustainable manner.

The rational approach is actually still used as a reference, but the reality is that decision-makers in the school environment often adjust their choices based on the availability of information and real context in the field. This is reinforced by the findings of the study showing that decision-making in schools is not only influenced by logical approaches, but also by the preferences of experience, organizational culture, and practical abilities of principals and educators (Saputri, Rahayu, & Andriani, 2024) [16].

The satisficing model in decision-making emerged in response to the limitations of rationality. This model emphasizes that decision-makers will stop searching for alternatives when they have found options that meet the minimum acceptable criteria (Sari, Kirana, Susilowati, Hidayat, & Kusuma, 2024) [17]. In the context of education administration, this approach is considered more realistic because it is in accordance with the working conditions of school managers who are full of administrative and regulatory demands. Hoy & Miskel (2013) emphasizing that decision-making in schools is a dynamic process that is never truly final, because every decision has the potential to give birth to new problems. This view is reinforced by Handoko who states that the effectiveness of decisions is not only measured by their perfection, but also by the extent to which the decision can be implemented and has a positive impact on the organization (Handoko, 2016) [5].

The context of educational institutions in Indonesia reinforces the relevance of the application of the satisficing model in decision-making. Relatively hierarchical bureaucratic structures, attachments to central policies, and limited school autonomy often limit the space for decision-makers to conduct comprehensive analysis as required in the optimizing model. According to Mulyasa, school principals are more often faced with practical choices that must be decided immediately in order to maintain the stability and sustainability of school operations. This condition shows that educational decisions in Indonesia tend to be pragmatic and adaptive, so the satisficing model is the most appropriate approach to describe the reality of decision-making in educational institutions (Mulyasa, 2013) [12].

It is important to study the satisficing model in decision-making in educational institutions. Through a literature review, this article seeks to conceptually examine the satisficing model, its stages, and its relevance in the context of educational institutions in Indonesia. This study is expected not only to enrich the theoretical treasures of education management, but also to provide a more realistic framework for education practitioners in reflecting on their daily decision-making practices.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach, which is a research approach in which the data is presented orally, not through statistical tests in the analysis process. A series of actions in this study include reading and recording the necessary data, processing research materials, and collecting data from various literature sources. Thus, the method used is a literature study with a qualitative approach. This study uses a literature review or literature review method. Literature review is a literature search activity by reading various books, journals and other scientific publications that are relevant to the research topic, to produce writings related to a certain topic or issue (Hartanto, 2020) [7].

The stages of literature review include: article collection, article reduction or sorting based on certain variables, display or arrangement of selected articles, organization and discussion, and drawing conclusions. In this study, the author collected and analyzed various literature related to the satisfactory model in decision-making in educational institutions. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, with the flow of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Asbar & Witarsa, 2020) [2].

Results and Discussion
The Concept of Decision Making in Educational Institutions

Decision-making is at the heart of the managerial process in educational institutions because all management functions—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating—ultimately boil down to the act of choosing an alternative policy. In the framework of education management, decision-making cannot be understood simply as a technical activity of choosing the best option, but rather as a strategic process that determines the direction, sustainability, and quality of educational services. (Fattah (2012) emphasizing that education decisions have long-term implications for the quality of institutions and the performance of educational human resources. This view is in line with Wahjosumidjo (2010) that place the quality of school principals' decisions as the main indicator of the effectiveness of educational leadership. These two views show that decision-making is not just an administrative activity, but an instrument of strategic leadership that shapes the dynamics of school organizations.

In practice, decision-making in educational institutions takes place in a space full of complexity and diverse interests. Decisions do not only concern administrative aspects, but also intersect directly with the pedagogical dimension, teacher professionalism, and student needs. Mulyasa (2013) emphasizing that school principals are required to balance administrative demands with the need for quality learning development. Educational decisions are often the result of negotiations between policy demands, institutional capacity, and real conditions on the ground (Saputri *et al.*, 2024) [16]. This condition shows that decision-making in schools is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to a purely linear rational process.

Furthermore, the decision-making process in educational institutions in Indonesia generally takes place in conditions of limitations, both in terms of information, time, and resources. This situation reinforces the argument that the assumption of full rationality in decision-making is difficult to apply consistently. Siagian (2012) [18] states that decision-makers in organizations are often faced with uncertainty, so that the decisions made are the result of a compromise between ideal expectations and factual limitations. According to Susanto *et al.* (2025) [20] data limitations and administrative pressure, it is the dominant factor that influences the decision of school principals, even in the context of implementing data-based management. This condition confirms that decision-making in educational institutions is more adaptive and situational than fully rational and comprehensive.

In addition to technical factors, the organizational culture and bureaucratic structure of education also play an important role in shaping decision-making patterns in schools. Hierarchical organizational structures and reliance on central regulations often limit decision-making autonomy at the level of educational units. Research Harahap *et al*., (2025) [6] shows that many strategic decisions in elementary schools are geared more toward policy compliance than on institutional development innovations. Similar findings were also put forward by Syifaurrahmah, Milda, & Sirozi (2025) [21], who asserted that bureaucratic pressure contributes to the emergence of pragmatic and minimalist decisions. This analysis indicates that the structural context of Indonesian education forms the character of decisions that tend to be "moderately run" rather than "most ideal".

Decision-making in educational institutions can be understood as a complex and contextual process, which is influenced not only by rational considerations alone, but also by structural, cultural, and institutional limitations. In practice, decision-makers are often faced with limited information, regulatory pressures, administrative demands, and the expectations of various stakeholders. This situation causes educational decisions to rarely be taken in ideal conditions that are completely rational and comprehensive. Instead, decisions are more often the result of a compromise between the expected goals and the reality that makes it possible to achieve. This shows that decision-making in educational institutions is adaptive, situational, and highly influenced by the organizational context and the policy environment that surrounds it.

Furthermore, the fact that educational decisions are not always directed to achieve the most optimal results theoretically, but rather to maintain organizational sustainability and institutional operational stability, has important implications for the selection of the decision-making model used. In the context of Indonesian educational institutions that are loaded with limited resources, hierarchical bureaucracy, and complex social dynamics, decision-making approaches that emphasize full rationality are becoming less relevant. Therefore, a conceptual understanding of the nature of decision-making is an important foundation for analyzing more realistic and applicable decision-making models. The satisficing model emerged as a framework capable of explaining decision-making practices in educational institutions, because this model emphasizes the achievement of solutions that are "sufficiently adequate" and can be implemented effectively within existing limitations.

A Satisfying Model in Decision Making

The satisficing model in decision-making departs from the critique of the assumption of full rationality that has dominated classical decision theory. In organizational practice, decision-makers rarely have complete information, sufficient time, and unlimited analytical capabilities to comprehensively evaluate all alternatives. Therefore, the decisions taken are more often the result of finding solutions that are considered adequate rather than optimal. Salusu (2015) [15] explains that decision-making is essentially an alternative selection process in conditions of uncertainty, so "good enough" decisions are often more rational than ideal decisions that are difficult to realize. This view is reinforced by the assertion Handoko (2016) [5] that rational limitations drive managers to stop the process of finding alternatives when they have found an acceptable solution. Usman (2019) [22] adding that adequate decisions actually function as a risk control mechanism in complex organizations. In synthesis, these three views affirm that satisficing is a logical response to the reality of limitations in decision-making.

From the perspective of organizational theory and decision-maker behavior, satisficing is understood as a rational-practical strategy that allows individuals and organizations to continue to function effectively in the midst of limitations. This approach is in line with the idea of bounded rationality put forward by Herbert A. Simon, who asserts that individuals are not capable of processing all information optimally in every decision situation (Simon, 1997) [19]. In the context of Indonesian literature, this concept is explained as a form of limited rationality that is oriented towards the acceptance of decisions, not the perfection of results (Salusu, 2015) [15]. The science model is widely used in modern decision-making studies because it is able to explain realistic and adaptive decision behavior. This analysis shows that satisficing is not a haphazard decision, but a rational approach that is tailored to human capacity and organizational conditions (Sari *et al*., 2024) [17].Top of Form

The satisficing model represents an important shift in the decision-making paradigm, from ideal rationality to contextual and operational rationality. This approach emphasizes that the quality of decisions is not solely determined by the level of optimality of outcomes, but by the feasibility, acceptability, and ability of those decisions to be implemented within the organization's real limitations. Analytically, satisficing does not lower the standard of rationality, but rather reconstructs it to be in harmony with the cognitive capacity of decision-makers and the dynamics of the organizational environment. Therefore, it provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding decisions as adaptive processes, rather than as the result of mere ideal calculations, while also being a relevant theoretical foundation for analyzing operational decision-making models in various organizational contexts.Bottom of Form

The Relevance of the Satisfing Model in Educational Institutions

In the study of educational administration, the satisficing model is specifically described by Wayne K. Hoy and Cecil G. Miskel as an approach commonly used by school leaders. They affirm that decision-making in educational institutions rarely takes place under ideal conditions, so school principals or institutional leaders tend to stop looking for alternatives when they have found solutions that are considered feasible and workable (Hoy & Miskel, 2013) [8]. These findings are in line with the results of contemporary studies showing that education decisions are often influenced by the need to maintain operational stability and respond quickly to contextual problems (Nengsih & Salito, 2025) [13]. Hoy and Miskel emphasized that schools are basically a decision-making structure, so the effectiveness of educational organizations is largely determined by the ability of administrators to manage decisions practically and adaptively through the decision-making action cycle. According to Hoy and Miskel, the decision-making process with a satisficing model consists of five main steps, including:

1. Recognize and Define the Problem or Issue

In the context of educational institutions, the introduction and definition of problems is a crucial stage because educational problems are often complex and interrelated. School principals or madrasah leaders not only face academic problems, but also managerial, social, and cultural problems. According to Mulyasa 2013 [12], many school policy failures stem from inaccuracies in defining problems from the start. Arikunto & Yuliana (2008) [1] emphasizing that educational problems often appear in the form of surface symptoms, such as low learning outcomes or discipline, even though the root of the problem can come from leadership, school climate, or evaluation systems.

In school practice in Indonesia, the stage of problem identification often begins with routine monitoring of academic data, teacher/student attendance, or stakeholder feedback. For example, in many schools, principals detect a decline in student achievement from internal evaluation reports or parent complaints. This identification is also influenced by teachers' perceptions of the need for change, as reported by a study in Fronika, Santoso, Ermita, & Sulastri (2021) [4] which teachers see the need to improve the quality of principal's decisions through measurable problem-solving indicators.

2. Analyze the Difficulties in the Existing Situation

The stage of analyzing the difficulties in the existing situation is carried out by systematically identifying various factors that hinder the achievement of educational goals in schools, both internal and external. At this stage, education managers are required to understand the real conditions faced by the institution, such as limited human resources, infrastructure, less supportive policies, and low participation of school residents. Sagala (2017) [14] explains that problem analysis in education management is often non-linear, because it involves a variety of interests, perceptions, and backgrounds of school actors, ranging from principals, teachers, education staff, to students. Therefore, the difficulty analysis process requires a comprehensive, participatory, and data-based approach so that problems can be mapped in their entirety and become a strong basis in formulating alternative solutions and making appropriate decisions.

Based on research Muttaqin & Syafi'I (2024) [10] after a problem is identified, the school conducts a situation analysis—for example through staff meetings or quantitative data collection. Principals collect data on facilities, human resources, and achievements before determining the focus of their strategy, so that this analysis becomes the foundation for more rational and evidence-based decisions. This analysis is generally pragmatic and related to the limited resources in Indonesian schools, which indirectly reflects the bounded rationality character in decision-making.

3. Establish Criteria for a Satisfactory Solution

At this stage, the principal sets decision criteria based on the real limitations faced by the school, such as limited resources, time, and applicable policies. The criteria used generally focus on the minimum standards that can be accepted by all school residents without causing significant resistance.

Usman (2019) [22] stated that school principals often base the determination of decision criteria on the principles of operational feasibility, social acceptance in the school environment, and conformity with education regulations and policies. The solution criteria set serve as a practical guideline so that the decisions taken remain effective, legal, and oriented towards the sustainability and stability of education management.

In many Indonesian schools, the solution criteria are not determined by the size of the theoretical ideal alone, but by feasible factors. For example, in the study Fronika *et al*. (2021) [4] teachers assessed that the principal's decision was feasible if the decision-making process had a positive impact on school elements such as learning stability, teacher involvement, and practical results. These criteria are usually set out in teacher deliberation meetings or school committee forums and reflect a compromise between ideal goals and operational realities.

4. Develop a Plan or Strategy of Action

The development of action plans in Indonesian educational institutions is generally carried out through a collective and participatory approach involving various elements of school citizens. Teacher council meetings, school management teams, and deliberation forums are strategic spaces to discuss problems, formulate alternative solutions, and agree on action steps to be taken. Wahjosumidjo (2011) [24] stating that participatory decision-making in the school environment serves to increase the legitimacy of the policy while strengthening the sense of ownership and support of all school residents for the policies to be implemented. With joint involvement, the action plan is not only a formal decision of the leadership, but also a collective commitment that is easier to implement effectively and sustainably.

At this stage, the school devises a concrete strategy to address the selected problem. For example, research Laili (2022) [11] shows that school principals implement collaborative decision strategies involving teachers and staff, so that decisions are more effective and can be implemented together. This process of developing alternatives reflects the limitations of the search — as described in the satisficing model — where alternatives focus more on being realistic and adaptive to school situations.

5. Initiate Action Plan

At this stage, conceptual decisions are translated into clear activity programming, assignment of tasks and responsibilities, and scheduling of measurable implementation. In Indonesian educational institutions, the implementation of decisions not only involves school leaders, but also demands the active involvement of teachers and education personnel through open and continuous policy communication. Mulyasa (2013) [12] emphasized that education decisions that are not communicated well have the potential to experience obstacles and even failures in implementation, due to the lack of understanding and commitment from policy implementers.

Implementation of decisions in schools includes policy programming, communication to teachers/staff, and periodic

monitoring. In practice, school principals in Indonesia often monitor implementation through periodic meetings or learning supervision, then evaluate the results. For example, research Kenedi & Suryani (2023) [9] shows that implementation decisions involve meetings revising strategies based on field experience to improve student achievement. This suggests that the implementation stage is not just a one-time execution, but a continuous evaluative process that is aligned with the satisfying logic.

The relevance of the satisficing model in decision-making in Indonesian educational institutions lies in its ability to bridge the tension between the ideal demands of education policy and the operational reality of schools. Schools and madrassas in Indonesia are faced with high regulatory pressures, limited resources, and diversity of socio-cultural contexts that make rational-comprehensive decision-making difficult to implement consistently. In such a situation, the satisficing approach allows school leaders to make decisions that are functionally "quite good", acceptable to school residents, and able to maintain the stability and sustainability of the educational process. This model shows that the effectiveness of educational leadership is not solely measured by the ability to achieve theoretical optimal results, but also by the ability to read context, set the limits of the feasibility of decisions, and ensure that these decisions can be implemented in real terms in the field.

Furthermore, the application of the five-step cycle of decision-making in the satisficing model shows that the decision-making process in educational institutions is dynamic and iterative, rather than linear and final. The decisions taken are always open to adjustment based on implementation feedback, policy changes, and internal school dynamics. This is in line with the character of educational organizations as an open social system that continues to interact with its environment. Thus, the satisficing model is not only practical, but also conceptually relevant, since it is able to explain how educational decisions are shaped through rational compromises between ideal goals and real limitations. In this context, satisficing can be understood not as a weakness in decision-making, but as an adaptive strategy that reflects contextual rationality in educational leadership and administration in Indonesia.

Conclusion
Based on the results of the literature review that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the *satisficing* model is a relevant and contextual decision-making approach for educational institutions, especially in the reality of Indonesian education which is full of rational, structural, and cultural limitations. Decision-making in schools and madrassas does not always take place in ideal conditions that allow the achievement of the most optimal solution theoretically, but is more often directed towards achieving decisions that are adequate, acceptable, and can be implemented effectively. The satisficing model, as described in the *decision-making action cycle framework*, is able to explain the practice of decision-making that is adaptive, pragmatic, and oriented towards the sustainability of educational organizations. Therefore, through a satisfying approach, decision-making is not understood as a weakness of rationality, but rather as a form of contextual rationality that reflects the ability of educational institution leaders to navigate the complexity, limitations, and dynamics of the educational environment realistically and responsibly.

References
1. Arikunto S, Yuliana L. Manajemen pendidikan. Yogyakarta: Aditya Media; 2008.
2. Asbar RF, Witarsa R. Kajian literatur tentang penerapan pembelajaran terpadu di sekolah dasar. Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP). 2020;3(2).
3. Fattah N. Landasan manajemen pendidikan. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya; 2012.
4. Fronika W, Santoso Y, Ermita E, Sulastri S. Persepsi guru tentang proses pengambilan keputusan oleh kepala sekolah di SMKN 1 Pancung Soal Kabupaten Pesisir Selatan. Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai. 2021;5(2).
5. Handoko TH. Manajemen. Yogyakarta: BPFE; 2016.
6. Harahap FKS, Sabina I, Zainuri HS, Nurhafizah N, Nasution NS, Aswaruddin A. Pengambilan keputusan strategis dalam manajemen pendidikan di sekolah dasar. Education Achievement: Journal of Science and Research. 2025:118-126. doi:10.51178/jsr.v6i1.2251
7. Hartanto. Studi literatur: pengembangan media pembelajaran dengan software AutoCAD. Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Teknik Bangunan. 2020;6(1).
8. Hoy WK, Miskel CG. Educational administration: theory, research, and practice. 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education; 2013.
9. Kenedi J, Suryani E. Pengambilan keputusan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan prestasi siswa di SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Maronge. Jurnal Kependidikan. 2023;7(1).
10. Muttaqin K, Syafi'i M. Peran kepala sekolah dalam pengambilan keputusan pada perencanaan di MTS Al-Munawaroh. Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam. 2024;2(4):352-358. doi:10.58540/jurpendis.v2i4.700
11. Laili AN. Strategi pengambilan keputusan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan efektifitas manajemen MAN I Banyuwangi. Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Sosial. 2022;1(2):195-203. doi:10.58540/jipsi.v1i2.32
12. Mulyasa E. Manajemen dan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara; 2013.
13. Nengsih AR, Salito. Perencanaan dan pengambilan keputusan dalam pendidikan. Jurnal Akuntansi, Manajemen dan Ilmu Pendidikan. 2025;1(1).
14. Sagala S. Manajemen strategik dalam peningkatan mutu pendidikan. Bandung: Alfabeta; 2017.
15. Salusu J. Pengambilan keputusan stratejik: untuk organisasi publik dan organisasi non-profit. Jakarta: Grasindo; 2015.
16. Saputri EN, Rahayu S, Andriani T. Pengambilan keputusan dalam kajian manajemen pendidikan Islam. Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai. 2024;8(1).
17. Sari AA, Kirana AEW, Susilowati RAJ, Hidayat R, Kusuma IR. Teori pengambilan keputusan: implikasi teori pengambilan keputusan dalam pendidikan. Indonesian Journal of Public Administration Review. 2024;2(2):8. doi:10.47134/par.v2i2.3501
18. Siagian SP. Teori dan praktik pengambilan keputusan. Jakarta: Gunung Agung; 2012.
19. Simon HA. Administrative behavior. 4th ed. New York: Free Press; 1997.
20. Susanto TTD, Syafruddin L, Abdullah SF. Peningkatan kualitas pengambilan keputusan melalui manajemen berbasis data di sekolah. Madinasika: Manajemen Pendidikan dan Keguruan. 2025;6(2).
21. Syifaurrahmah S, Milda J, Sirozi M. Educational bureaucracy in Indonesia and its implications for school

governance. Journal of Educational Sciences. 2025;9(3):1255-1264. doi:10.31258/jes.9.3.p.1255-1264

22. Usman H. Manajemen: teori, praktik, dan riset pendidikan. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara; 2019.
23. Wahjosumidjo. Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah. Jakarta: Rajawali Press; 2010.
24. Wahjosumidjo. Kepemimpinan kepala sekolah. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada; 2011.

How to Cite This Article

Al Ghifari M, Putri RE, Muhajir S, Hasri S, Irawati. Satisfactory model in decision making in educational institutions: a literature review study. Int J Multidiscip Res Growth Eval. 2026;7(1):156–161.

Creative Commons (CC) License