

Exploring the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Interpersonal Relations and Decision-Making Ability of Educational Administrators

Prof. Manju Sharma

Dept. of. Education, Jyoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur.

Ashish Mishra

Research Scholar, Dept. of. Education, Jyoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur.

This study examines the interplay between self-esteem, interpersonal relations, and decision-making ability among educational administrators. Drawing on psychological theory and empirical evidence, it highlights how administrators with strong self-esteem demonstrate confidence and resilience, while those with healthy interpersonal relations foster trust and collaboration. Data from senior secondary school principals revealed a significant correlation between these factors and effective decision-making. Regression analysis confirmed that self-esteem and interpersonal relations together serve as reliable predictors of leadership quality. The findings underscore the importance of integrating emotional intelligence and relationship-building into training programs for educational leaders, ensuring decisions that are ethical, inclusive, and sustainable.

Educational administration is essentially a humanistic process. Principals and administrators interact daily with teachers, students, and parents, and their effectiveness depends not only on technical knowledge but also on psychological and interpersonal strengths. Decision-making is central to their role, and the quality of those decisions is shaped by self-esteem and the ability to maintain constructive relationships. Administrators with strong self-esteem tend to be confident, resilient, and willing to take responsibility, while those with healthy interpersonal relations foster trust, collaboration, and acceptance of decisions. Together, these factors create a leadership style that is both humane and effective. As Peter Drucker famously remarked, *"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."* In education, doing the right things requires confidence and empathy.

The present research aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, interpersonal relations, and decision-making ability among educational administrators. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether these psychological and social factors are reliable predictors of effective decision-making. A secondary objective is to explore whether gender differences play a role in decision-making capacity, given the increasing diversity of leadership in schools and colleges. By focusing on these objectives, the study attempts to highlight the human dimensions of administration that often remain overlooked in discussions of policy and management.

The study is guided by three major hypotheses. First, there exists a high correlation between decision-making ability and the combined influence of self-esteem and interpersonal relations. Second, there is a significant difference between male and female administrators in their decision-making capacity, reflecting possible variations in leadership style and social expectations. Third, self-esteem and interpersonal relations together serve as strong predictors of decision-making ability, suggesting that administrators who cultivate both qualities are more likely to succeed in their roles.

These hypotheses are grounded in psychological theory and supported by recent findings in educational leadership research, which emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and social-emotional learning in effective administration.

The study was conducted on a sample of twenty principals from senior secondary schools affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education in Kanpur. Schools were selected at random to ensure diversity in background and ability, thereby producing a heterogeneous sample representative of the broader educational landscape. To measure self-esteem, the Self-Esteem Measurement Questionnaire (SEMQ) developed by Pandey (1997) was used, which has a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Interpersonal relations were assessed using the Human Relationship Inventory (HRI) constructed by Pandey (1998), with a reliability coefficient of 0.87 and validity of 0.93. Decision-making capacity was measured using the Decision-Making Capacity Inventory (DMCI). These standardized tools ensured that the data collected was both reliable and valid, allowing for meaningful statistical analysis.

Each principal was approached individually and requested to complete the SEMQ, HRI, and DMCI. Responses were scored according to the manuals provided with each instrument, and raw scores were converted into standard scores (z-scores) for interpretation. This procedure ensured comparability across participants and allowed for statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis to be applied. The process was designed to be respectful and humane, recognizing that administrators are busy professionals whose participation required trust and cooperation.

The data was analyzed using product-moment correlation to study the relationship between self-esteem, interpersonal relations, and decision-making capacity. Two-tailed t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences, while stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to identify the best set of predictor variables for decision-making ability. Results revealed a strong correlation between decision-making capacity and both self-esteem and interpersonal relations, confirming the first hypothesis. Gender differences were observed, though not uniformly across all measures, suggesting that while men and women may approach leadership differently, both can achieve high levels of decision-making ability when supported by strong self-esteem and interpersonal relations. Regression analysis further confirmed that the combination of self-esteem and interpersonal relations is a powerful predictor of decision-making capacity.

The findings highlight the importance of psychological and interpersonal factors in educational leadership. Administrators with high self-esteem are more confident in their decisions, less fearful of criticism, and more willing to innovate. Those with strong interpersonal relations are better able to build consensus, reduce resistance to change, and foster a positive institutional climate. Together, these qualities lead to decisions that are not only effective but also humane and inclusive. Recent studies support these conclusions. Naveed et al. (2025) demonstrated that intellectual humility and decision-making self-esteem predict effective leadership styles. Sasere and Matashu (2025) found that emotional intelligence among school leaders improves teacher performance and student outcomes. Global analyses of PISA 2022 data (ScienceDirect, 2026) linked social-emotional learning dimensions to responsible decision-making. These findings reinforce the idea that leadership in education is not merely about authority but about relationships and self-awareness.



The study concludes that self-esteem and interpersonal relations are central to the decision-making ability of educational administrators. They are not peripheral “soft skills” but essential qualities that determine the success of leadership in schools. Administrators who cultivate confidence and empathy are better equipped to make decisions that benefit both institutions and individuals. Training programs for educational leaders should therefore integrate modules on self-esteem building, emotional intelligence, and relationship management alongside technical and policy-oriented skills. As Stephen Covey observed, “*Leadership is a choice, not a position.*” That choice is sustained by the inner strength of self-esteem and the outer strength of human relationships.

References

- Naveed, G., et al. (2025). Relationship between intellectual humility, decision-making self-esteem, and wellbeing among educational leaders. *Foundation University Journal of Psychology*.
- Sasere, O. B., & Matashu, M. (2025). Impacts of school leaders’ emotional intelligence on teachers and students. *Education Sciences*.
- ScienceDirect (2026). Social-Emotional Learning dimensions and responsible decision-making using PISA 2022 data.