

Blind Spots and Their Impact on the Decision-Making Process

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This study consisted of two subjects, which were characterised by seriousness and cognitive depth. These two topics are called ‘the blind spot’ and ‘the decision-making’ that are based on the dialectic linking the reality of Iraqi institutionalism with the logic that governs the current process in the intended organisation that is distinguished by a high degree of centralisation, in addition to its connection to a broad slice of Iraqi society. The study's objective is to determine the effect of the blind spot on decision-making by investigating a group of decision-makers in the Iraqi Ministry of Justice. The research community consisted of (100) decision makers in the Ministry of Justice, and research sample (90) based on the (Robert equation). Through the research, it was found that there was a moral statistical effect of implicit bias, bias in decision making, and bias in self-evaluation on the dimensions of decision making (knowledge, process, outputs, interconnectedness) in the Ministry of Justice. One of the recommendations of the study was to carry out in-depth research in the field of management models with the aim of enhancing decision-making, knowing the decision philosophy and giving evidence to develop the decision-making process.

Key words: *Blind Spot, Decision-Making.*

Introduction

The term "blind spots" is used, in the field of organisations' management, to refer to the practices which are carried out by different individuals at various organisational levels on the basis of excessive self-confidence in identifying their own knowledge and self-evaluation in a way that leads to them exceeding the degree of confidence (NG, 2009) which is appropriate in the judgments they make. The excessive confidence leads to the formation of blind spots and consequently results in many inaccurate interpretations of decisions, where many people practice the multiple systemic biases in the judgment due to poor awareness, which leads to their ignorance of the results of those biases. (Ehrlinger, 2016).

Research Questions

1. What does the Blind Spot mean?
2. What does the decision-making process mean, and what is its impact on the organisational domain?
3. Is there a contribution by the blind spot variables on the decision-making process at the ministry of Justice?
4. What is the impact of this contribution of the blind spot on the decision-making process at the Ministry of Justice of Iraq?

Research Hypothesis

H01 - There is no significance correlation degree between the blind spot and the decision-making process and its sub-variables.

H1 - There is a significance correlation degree between the blind spot and decision-making process and its sub-variables

H02 - There is no significance impact degree between the blind spot and the decision-making process and its sub-variables

H2 - There is a significance impact degree between the blind spot and the decision-making process and its sub-variables

Literature Review

The Blind Spot

Many individuals in organisations are less likely to recognise where they are biased and this is a result of individual differences or a tendency to favour personal interests, besides the weakness in the ability to make decisions and desire to promote oneself, which creates a gap between their actual performance and their expected performance (*Scopelliti, 2015*). This coincides with the results of some studies on blind spots, which indicates that the bias is the result of naive and selfish realism and weak perception, and thus there will be inefficiency in decision-making. It is worth noting that the intended bias is cognitive bias and not ideological bias, and there are many differences between these two types, (*Diesendruck, 2009*), but the most important of these differences is that cognitive bias relates to the cultural and scientific fields, whereas ideological bias relates to sufficiency and there is no room for answers in the sense that it is effectively closed, and calls for absolute centralisation in judging things and others. One of the best examples of cognitive bias is the difference in the philosophical approach between Aristotle and his teacher Plato – to look at things through reason or abstract truth. (*Ehrlinger, 2016*). As for examples of ideological bias, it is what happens with extremist religious groups and others and is an appeal to nervousness and strength – refer to the literature

on (the Clash of Civilisations) in which there is sufficient clarification of the concepts and applications of ideological bias. There were clear references to the topic of blind spots within administrative thought, one of the first of which was for the psychologist, when the blind spots are mentioned within Johari's window, which is an administrative technique and is used as one of the types of intuitive professional training in companies. It consists of four regions and is as follows (*Luft, 1969*):

- *Free activity zone*: it represents the qualities that everyone recognises
- *Hidden self-zone*: it represents the information about a person that is not perceived by others (*Gino, 2008*)
- *Blind spot*: it represents the information or attributes that the individual does not realise about himself but others realise
- *Unknown area*: it includes attributes and motives that everyone does not realise (*Diesendruck, 2009*)

Porter used the term blind spot to denote the uncommon wisdom that does not include the truth but continues to affect business strategy, that is, that this spot will be critical in influencing the decision-making perception and thus, it will be weak in its ability to choose the appropriate alternative for the organisation to implement the appropriate strategy. (*Porter, 1980*). It is natural that there is a possibility to specify the dimensions of blind spots for the purpose of providing the possibility of measuring them as in (*Sherman, 2013*) and (*Tang, 2013*) and is as follows:

* *The First Dimension-Implicit Bias*

In general, a variety of cognitive and social biases are observed that lead consequently to blind spots. This dimension includes the interaction of two phenomena, namely delusion meditation and naïve realism, specifically in the evaluation of oneself and other people. (*McCartney, 2006*). The implicit bias occurs through the evaluation process and judgment on others, where some individuals believe that they are less biased than their peers due to poor awareness, in addition to that evaluation is based on apparent behaviour and not on the ideas carried by others, which are characterised by difficulty in reaching them, instead of relying on evaluation at the level of the intelligence, cognitive ability and ability to make decisions. (*Gentry, 2015*).

* *The Second Dimension – Bias in Decision Making*

Several studies have shown that decision-making tasks require competence to work in the right direction, as many of these decisions determine the fate of the entire organisation. (*Elashi, 2015*). The effect of blind spots on the efficiency of the decision-making process is due to the individual differences of managers, the extent of their reliability and their expectations for the

real world in which they live and their ability to make decisions as well as they are not benefitting from their previous experiences exclusively in this field. These issues contribute to format the blind spots through the availability of a weak possibility to evaluate the available alternatives and judge them correctly, which means the biasing to subjective factors. (*Hoffman, 2014*).

**** The Third Dimension – Bias in Self-Evaluation***

The self-evaluation bias occurs through weak self-confidence, self-efficacy, and emotional stability, as well as the lack of objective evaluation criteria. For example, when there are people to be chosen to occupy a particular job, the criteria of the selection and evaluation must be used that are supposed to fit the job. (*Diesendruck, 2009*). Here, high or unequal weights may be given to the evaluation which may mislead the decision-maker and form the blind spots, in the sense of the biases that affect the taken judgments. It is worth noting the importance of relying on cognitive mechanisms that contribute to reducing the prejudice, (*Gino, 2008*) for example, the use of undefined words such as ‘witty’ where it is difficult to define its concept in the required form, in addition to the accuracy of comparisons made with others, especially in the field of capacity assessment. It must be pointed out that it is necessary to rely on high-level cognitive indicators specialised in classifying the human personality as in Myers-Briggs Type Indicators. (*Ehrlinger, 2016*).

Decision Making

**** Decision-Making Conceptuality***

The visions regarding the decision-making process differed according to the different intellectual schools to which the researchers and writers belonged and what they reached in this concern. (*Younis, 2000*) discussed the decision-making process from various aspects. He pointed out that the language dictionaries presented several synonymous meanings for the word decision, including deciding something or insisting on something, or reaching an inevitable result, solutions, or stability of opinion about a specific idea. (*Elashi, 2015*). Whereas the idiomatic or scientific meaning of the decision indicates that it is an option determined by the decision-maker about what should or should not be in a specific case. It can also be said that decision making is considered a selection process that results from analysing a specific situation. The diversity of explanatory decision-making concepts was due to the different motivations of those interested in terms of the meaning, definition or concept. From the point of view of the strategists who presented a concept for the decision, it is a point where the interests of the organisation balance with the benefitted parties from it or stakeholders (*Fombrun, 1989*). The quantitative school scholars had another interpretation of the decision, where they considered it as a result that is reached through the application of the decision theory

within a specific case, which means that the decision has numerical connotations leading to a result interpreted within a specific circumstance, such as what is happening in the field of operations research (*Fishburn, 1989*). Either from the point of view of organisation scholars, they have indicated that the decision is one of the critical variables in the organisation as well as being an option that reflects the organisation's need for it in a particular circumstance (*Younis, 2000*). Organisational behaviour scientists looked at the decision by linking it with organisational orientation within the organisation's environmental framework, where these scholars viewed the decisions taken by senior management from the angle of being an expression of the values of senior management and its interpretation for trends of the various decision values within their economic, social and other dimensions (*Nordenhaven, 1995*). It is noted that the general framework for decision-making can be described by the following:

- The decision-making process is one of the fundamental and vital behavioural issues for individuals and groups. Its importance is not limited to the success and failure of managers but extends to their repercussions on the fate of the organisation as a whole, positively or negatively. (*Blais, 2005*).
- The decision-making process is an administrative outcome of a set of procedures, processes and philosophies that are affected by a number of variables, one of which is related to the external environment and its variables and the other is related to the manager himself. (*Diesendruck, 2009*).
- The decision-making process includes the selection of an alternative from among the available alternatives to find an appropriate solution to a specific problem or available opportunity in a changing business environment. (*Enizi, 2017*)

It is worthwhile to note that it is within the responsibility of the organisations' departments to develop the managers' ability in order to make decisions that provide opportunities of stability for the organisation and to increase its expectations in the near future, as well as to increase its effectiveness and reduce costs and generate new behaviours so that they can deal with unexpected events in light of the multiple types of decisions represented by personal and organisational decisions (*Daft, 2010*) – the basic, strategic, organisational and fashionable decisions and the programmed and non-programmed decisions. The types of decisions mentioned above are only an expression of administrative methods that express the type of problem or the nature of the circumstance faced by the organisation, or what the response is to the wishes of stakeholders in general, and all this is related to the value systems of the manager or the administration in general. (*Blais, 2005*)

*** *Rationality and Decision-Making***

Rationality forms the cornerstone of the conceptual structure for decision-making, as it addresses the most critical issues in this regard by providing the possibility to clarify the

relationships between causes and results in a way that enhances the decision-makers' ability to monitor the environment and predict its changes, leading to the most acceptable solution to the various problems or issues facing the organisation. It is extremely important that the concept of rationality be addressed, especially in administrative thought, as it generally means a benign style of thinking and worthy behaviour that is followed (*Murshid, 1989*). When an administrator is described as a rational person, this is praise for his style at work and a reference to his intelligence and acumen, and conversely it indicates irrationality, where the availability of rationality in decisions and organisational behaviour is one of the most important causes of organisational success. (*Gino, 2008*). Herbert Simon's propositions added more philosophical dimensions to the concept of rationality, as Simon explained that absolute rationality means knowing of all consequences of matters. For this reason, the administrative person cannot be considered a rational being, because knowledge and overall familiarity with matters are far from the subjective capabilities of the individual or even the group; this is caused by many facets of deficiency and inabilities that characterise man and impede him from achieving complete rationality (*Heames, 2010*).

Simon adds that another type of rationality is the subjective rationality of the individual decision-maker, or what is known as limited rationality, which is affected by the inherent shortcomings and deficiencies in a person. It is based on management theory, which focusses on studying how to create organisations and make them operate with remarkable effectiveness (*Heames, 2010*). There were certain models for the decision-making process that received great attention from researchers and thinkers in the field of organisational theory and organisational behaviour. These models refer to exclusion, processes, or stages of decision-making, and most of these models have derived their data from concepts of rationality that have already been discussed. The Carnegie model was chosen as a conceptual guide to decision-making due to its focus on environmental, organisational and behavioural problems with the same interest. In addition to that, the choice was based on the extent of congruence between its concepts and the fields of decision-making that were adopted in this research, which is represented in knowledge, process, outputs, and interconnectedness (*Daft, 2001*).

With regard to the field of knowledge, the implications of the Carnegie model in this regard have been represented in the fact that this model has stressed that all managers participate in the search for specific information that satisfies and persuades all parties to identify alternative solutions, instead of searching for all possible solutions to solve a problem faced by the organisation. (*Diesendruck, 2009*). The field of the process has been suggested in this model that managers resort to persuasion in order to decide a specific standard that they use to evaluate possible and acceptable solutions (*Elashi, 2015*). Therefore, satisfaction and persuasion will focus on searching for less expensive information. Thus, the decision-making process will be affected first by the values and preferences of the decision-makers. Regarding the outputs, the Carnegie model assumes that the managers are characterised by limited rationality in terms of

collecting and processing the information, and that the fact that the managers have limited capabilities to collect and process the information does not mean at all that they will take the first acceptable solution offered to them and can demonstrate their ability to make decisions by activating their personal and analytical skills by using the technology like a computer to improve it. (Gino, 2008). Finally, with regard to the field of interconnectedness, the implications of the Carnegie model in this field were represented by the organisation's success relying on the degree of tightening of its decisions and marking the difference between right and wrong in the implementation of tasks. The decision must necessarily express the degree of the knowing and awareness of the conditions of the organisation, which means that the generation of alternatives is not open but rather limited according to the situation faced by the organisation, and that the choice is made for the solution that achieves the advantage to the organiser. (Blais, 2005).

Results

Table 1: Analysis of the 4 postulations by ANOVA test

Dependent Variable	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
y1	Regression	41.066	4	10.267	24.993	.000 ^a
	Residual	14.377	85	.411		
	Total	55.444	89			
y2	Regression	41.539	4	10.385	22.782	.000 ^a
	Residual	15.954	85	.456		
	Total	57.494	89	6.860		
y3	Regression	27.441	4	.682	10.055	.000 ^a
	Residual	23.878	85			
	Total	51.319	89			
y4	Regression	28.478	4	7.120	10.511	.000 ^a
	Residual	23.708	85	.677		
	Total	52.186	89			

Predictors: (Constant), x1, x2, x3

The two main Zero Hypotheses of this research were rejected, and accept the two alternative Hypotheses (H1&H2) according to the Correlation Significance between the main and sub variables: also the results of the (F) Test (The calculated and Tabular Values) was significant at (0.000) degree.

The statistical findings represent a clear recognition by the research sample to the reality of blind spots and decision making depending on their expertise: furthermore, the seriousness of these subjects to the tasks and goals of the Ministry of Justice is indicated in order to provide



a guarantee that the decisions will be taken for the sake of the citizens – as is fair without any injustice – and to reduce the impact of as many blind spots as possible.

Recommendations

From the analysis and results presented, this study recommends conducting continuous training courses to the employees in general and the decision-makers in particular, because these courses would strengthen their cognitive aspects in behavioural and administrative systems. Further, the blind spots should be highlighted as a modern variable that requires continuous study and research. Finally, field studies should be conducted on overall aspects of the decision-making process.



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