

McCartt & Rohrbaugh (1989): Evaluating Group Decision Support Effectiveness: A Performance Study of Decision Conferencing

The authors have researched the effectiveness of decision making in within decision conferences. The overall effectiveness was assessed with an eight scales measuring based on the Competing Values approach. The success of conferences was measured through the number of participants which believed the conference resulted in a decision and the benefits derived from different criteria (discussion opportunity, expected resolution of the problem, etc.).

- Group Decision Support Systems improve decision making by:
 - Removing barriers of communication. → Automated input of anonymous ideas.
 - Providing techniques for better defining and structuring of problems. → Cognitive mapping & System Dynamics
 - Directing systematically the pattern, timing and content of discussion. → Computerized conference, decision networks, etc.
- Decision conferencing:
 - Single-user computer to support groups of managers working face-to-face.
 - Create shared understanding to be able to create clear plan of action.
 - Incorporates different perspectives of participants.
 - Three players: Facilitator, analyst and correspondent.
 - Outcome: Plan of action & record of the entire process
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Group Decision Processes:
 - Also ineffective decision processes can result in good outcomes. → Decision process cannot be evaluated just on the outcome.
 - “Goodness” or outcomes is very difficult to evaluate. → Best way to focus on process itself and not on the outcomes.
- Competing Values Approach: 4 middle range models of organizational analysis:
 - Internal process: Information management and coordination. → Empirical perspective. → Feelings and social compromise.
 - Rational goal model: Planning and objectives setting. → Rational perspective. → Realism and resources.
 - Open systems model: Focus on flexibility and readiness. → Political perspective. → Information utilization.
 - Human relation model: Focus on cohesion and moral. → Consensual perspective. → Subjective rationality.
- Study results → Beneficial for the conference was.
 - Location of the conference away from office distractions.
 - Presence of an outside facilitator.
 - Opportunity for open and extended discussion.
 - Building computer-based decision model.
 - Reviewing alternative choices.
 - Construction of an action plan.
 - Believing to solve the problem.