

**AN ANALYSIS OF EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO THE  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: A CASE STUDY AT A FOUNDATION  
UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY**

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETEN ÖĞRETMENLERİN KARAR  
ALMA SÜRECİ İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARININ ANALİZİ: TÜRKİYE'DE BİR VAKIF  
ÜNİVERSİTESİNDE VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

**Mehmet Salih YOĞUN**

Hasan Kalyoncu University

**Özet**

Karar alma süreci akademik ve idari rol, görev ve sorumluluklarının bir parçası olarak okul liderlerinin ve öğretmenlerin problemlere daha dikkatli bir şekilde sistematik olarak yaklaşmalarını gerektirir. Bu sebeple, paydaşların farklı sosyal, eğitimsel, kültürel ve psikolojik geçmişlerinden ötürü sürekli şekil değiştiren karar alma süreçlerinin karmaşık doğasını dikkate almak onlar için vazgeçilmezdir. Bunları göz önünde tutarak bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmenlerin karar alma süreci ile ilgili algılarını araştırmak ve takip ettikleri karar alma tarzlarını tespit etmektir. Ayrıca bu çalışma cinsiyet ve öğretme deneyiminin öğretmenlerin karar alma tarzını etkileyip etkilemediğini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu çalışmada amacına uygun olacak şekilde nitel bir vaka çalışma tasarımı uygulanmıştır. Bir vakıf üniversitenin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda çalışan 6 İngilizce öğretmeni (3 bayan, 3 erkek) katılımcı olarak bu çalışmaya dâhil olmuştur. Toplanan veriler Creswell'in tümevarım içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda ortaya çıkan veriler öğretmenlerin karar alma süreci ile ilgili algılarının 4 başlık altında sınıflandığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bunlar (1) problemin dikkatli değerlendirilmesi, (2) tüm paydaşların katılımı, (3) istenmedik bir durumu reaksiyon ve (4) sorumluluk hissetme olarak sıralanmaktadır. Ayrıca erkeklerin rasyonel karar alma tarzını kullanırken bayanların ise bağımlı karar verme tarzını kullandıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Buna ek olarak bulgulara göre tüm katılımcılar öğretme tecrübesinin karar alma süreci ile olumlu bir korelasyona sahip olduğunu ve bunun da öğretmenlerin daha fazla tecrübeli olmasının daha başarılı ve etkili kararlar alması anlamına geldiğini ifade etmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Karar Alma Tarzı, Cinsiyet, Öğretme Tecrübesi, Algılar, Öğretme Ve Öğrenme Süreci

**Abstract**

Decision-making process requires school leaders and teachers to approach problems in a systematic way with more attention as a part of their academic and administrative roles, duties and responsibilities. In this respect, it is inevitable for them to consider the complex nature of decision-making procedures that is reshaped again and again due to the stakeholders various social, educational, cultural and psychological backgrounds. Bearing these points in mind, the purpose of the current study was to investigate the EFL teachers' perceptions of decision-making process and identify the decision-making style they follow. Additionally, it aspired

after searching whether gender and teaching experience effect the EFL teachers' decision-making styles. A qualitative case study design was applied for the present study in accordance with its purpose. 6 EFL teachers (3 females and 3 male) working at the School of Foreign Languages in a private university took part in this study as participants. Collected data was analysed with Creswell's (2012) inductive content analysis. The findings reached as a result of the study revealed that teachers' perceptions of decision-making process were categorized under four headings. They were (1) the careful consideration of the situation, (2) involvement of all the parties, (3) reacting to an undesired situation, and (4) feeling responsible. It was also observed that while the men utilized rational decision-making style, the women preferred dependent decision-making style. Additionally, according to the findings, all of the participants stated that teaching experience had a positive correlation with decision-making process which means that the more experience teachers have, the more successful and effective decisions they take.

**Keywords:** Decision-Making Styles, Gender, Teaching Experience, Perceptions, Teaching And Learning Process

## 1. INTRODUCTION

School leaders and teachers are required to be involved in decision-making process on numerous situations with regard to their academic and administrative duties and responsibilities. Considering the complexity of the teaching and learning environment that is shaped by all stakeholders' different social, academic, psychological and cultural backgrounds, the decision-making procedures tend to necessitate a systematic approach to the problems observed with more attention. Through their past experiences and interactions with the environment humans start establishing their judgements and knowledge in harmony with their perceptions and beliefs, forming their cognitive patterns in order to decide on their future actions, and adjusting these behaviors depending on the possible changes in their environment and mental patterns. As Koçel (2001) states people make lots of decisions as a result of their relationships with social factors throughout their lives.

The concept of decision-making is associated with many different attributes and characteristics such as efficiency in job (Russ, McNeilly, & Comer, 1996), self-respect (Thunholm, 2004), deliberate actions and behaviors (Galotti et al., 2006), and decision-making skills (Bruine de Bruin et al., 2007, Parker et al., 2007). According to the research conducted, decision-making theories are split up in two main ways (Epstein, 1994, Evans, 2008, Osman, 2004, Sloman, 1996). First, the "rational" mode, which is slower, benefits from logical assumptions, reasons and deliberate behaviors. Second, the "affective/experiential" mode, which is fast, utilizes intuition and past experiences.

The most commonly used definition of decision making in the literature is the intention of selecting the most appropriate possibility among various alternatives on the purpose of achieving a goal as a consequence of mental or instinctive process (Kuzgun, 1992, Weihrich & Koontz, 1993). Nardi and Wales (1985) consider decision making as a process involving various thinking skills such as critical, creative, dialectic and analytic thinking. Some researchers regard decision making as an inseparable part of management in that teachers and school leaders have to take some key decisions throughout the learning and teaching process

that effect the success of the institutions. For example, See Priem (1994) evaluates the decision-making process as the most crucial managerial action of all as, especially in planning procedure, it occupies a significant position.

Decision-making is a cyclical and multidimensional process involving various phases such as identifying the situation that requires to be concentrated upon and diagnosing it clearly, deciding the tools to collect required data for the stated problem, coming up with as many alternatives and solutions as possible, reviewing and evaluating available options and choosing the most appropriate one among them considering possible outcomes, implementing the decision taken and then evaluating results if needed and getting feedback from the stakeholders involved in the process (Marco et al., 2003). Depending on the consequences observed as a result of decision-making process, people might need to go back to the first phase and restart the procedure to reach a better and desired outcome. However, as Eren (2003) points out the fact that it is a stressful process since it is challenging to find out alternatives, evaluate their harms and benefits, and analyze their outcomes in an effective way.

Decision-making process can be categorized into different styles and Deniz (2004) summarizes these styles in four different groups. The first one is carefully decision making style that explains an individual's situation of looking for required information thoughtfully before reaching a decision. In this style, an individual evaluates all possible options carefully with their benefits and harms and then makes decisions. They depend on their observations, facts and prior experiences while making decisions. The second one is avoidant decision making style that involves an individual's situation of tending to avoid making decisions and leaving the responsibility of decision making to another person. The third one is postponer decision making style and it is an individual's situation of edjourning a decision constantly for another time although there is not a justified or valid reason. Individuals may postpone the decision making process if the issue is insignificant as well. The last one is panic decision making style and it involves situations demanding people to make a decision quickly and impetuously because of the pressure of time and the significancy of the issue.

Considering previously determined decision measures, Scott and Bruce (1995) introduce four different decision-making styles refered as rational, intuitive, dependent, and avoidant. The fifth style, spontaneous, was added later on. The rational decision-making style is based on logical assumptions and reasons while intuitive style depends on feelings and emotions. The dependent style involves situations in which people ask for help from others while making a decision. The avoidant style, as the name suggests, relies on postponing the decisions to another time in the future. Finally, spontaneous style consists of situations in which people decide quickly.

Some studies conducted previously reveal that intuitive and spontaneous styles are positively connected (Baiocco et al., 2009, Loo, 2000, Thunholm, 2004) claiming that these two styles can easily be observed within a profile together. Additionally, Loo's (2000) study affirms that there is a positive correlation between rational and dependent styles claiming that people deciding rationally tend to consult others for their opinions.

Research focusing on the connection between decision making process and aging concept reveals some significant outcomes by pointing out that older people tend to trust more in their prior experiences and feelings and less in reasons compared to younger people (Peters, Hess,

Västfjäll, & Auman, 2007). The reasons for old people to rely less on reasons are explained in some studies stating that fluid cognitive skills and working memory, which are directly promoting rational thinking abilities, weaken as people get older (Babcock & Salthouse, 1990, Verhaeghen et al., 1993). Some researchers believe that emotional and affective skills which go along with intuitions might stay the same or even get stronger as people grow older (Blanchard-Fields, 2007, Charles & Carstensen, 2010, Kennedy & Mather, 2007).

Decision-making process is also associated with gender issue and Gray (1992) expresses that men and women are so different from each other that they are as if from different worlds. Additionally, he confirms that women tend to rely more on their intuitions while men are considered rational most of the time. Furthermore, Sinclair, Ashkanasy, and Chattopadhyay (2010) report that women showed a tendency to utilize their intuition while men used reasons when they were required to express their feelings about losing and winning in a competition.

As cited in the study conducted by Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019), decision-making process is in conjunction with teacher and learner autonomy in previously conducted research. For example, in his study with 112 student teachers of English, Balçıklanlı (2010) states that the participants feel positive about considering their learners' voices with regard to their own learning in decision-making process bearing in mind that they have not had any experience in teaching. Additionally, the studies conducted by Nakata (2011) with 78 teachers and by Duong (2014) with 30 teachers of English have revealed that there is a gap between what teachers believe and how they behave in the classroom. The participants have positive opinions about learners' autonomy but they do not encourage their decision-making process in the real teaching environment. Finally, in a study with 48 teachers of English in Indonesia, Lengkanawati (2016) confirms that learners require to be supported with their teachers' guidance in decision-making process.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate EFL teachers' views on their decision-making process and observe how they decide when they encounter a problem. Additionally, I aspired after exploring whether gender differences and the amount of teaching experience effect their decision-making styles. In the light of the data collected from the participants, the below stated research questions were intended to be answered.

1. How do EFL teachers perceive their decision making process?
2. How do EFL teachers decide when they are faced with a problem?
3. Does the decision-making style differ according to the gender and teaching experience?

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. Research Design**

A qualitative case study design was chosen for the current study because, as supported by Woods and Calanzaro (1980), we aspired after making an extensive and scientific investigation of a group of EFL teachers on the purpose of analysing in-depth data relevant to their perceptions and beliefs. The research design implemented for the present study was determined and guided by our epistemological position that is affected by our ontological position.

### **2.2. Population and Sample**

Population of the study involves EFL teachers working at the School of Foreign Languages at a private university in Gaziantep. Sample group of the research consists of 6 voluntary teachers, of whom 3 are male and 3 are female. We utilized the purposive sampling to choose the participants. Ary et al. (2014) states that this type of sampling is adequate to supply comprehensive perceptives and understanding about the issue under investigation. Marshall and Rossman (2010) point out that various methods can be used in qualitative research on the purpose of satisfying the principles of purposive sampling. Therefore, we applied a criterion sampling. Ary et al. (2014) express that in this type of sampling the researcher defines the criteria and involves the individuals fulfilling the needs of determined criteria. Since we attempted to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of decision making process and find out whether gender and teaching experience effect their decision-making styles, we decided to set two criteria. First, 3 males and 3 female EFL teachers were selected on the purpose of observing the possible differences between genders. Second, while deciding on these 6 participants, we attached importance to study with teachers having different teaching experiences. Two teachers having teaching experience between 1-5 years, two teachers having teaching experience between 6-10 years and two teachers having teaching experience more than 10 years were selected to observe whether their perceptions of decision-making differ depending on their teaching experience or not.

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

The current study required instruments that could be utilized for a qualitative research so that EFL teachers' views on their decision-making process and the effects of gender and teaching experience on this process could be deeply investigated. After receiving required permission from the participants, two instruments were used to collect the data. First, a set of open-ended questions was used. Considering our epistemological stance that is directed by our ontological position, we determined that the most efficient way to gather data for our study would be asking the participants to share their perceptions and beliefs freely through the open-ended questions. Creswell (2012) believes that open-ended questions provide the participants with the opportunity of expressing their opinions and beliefs freely without facing any obstacles that might occur because of the previously conducted research results. With respect to that, we designed nine open-ended questions. Considering the fact that inferences about the content are directly affiliated with the development of instrument and establishment of content-related validity, we requested some experts in ELT department to share their opinions on designed open-ended questions. After collecting the information from the experts, we made necessary modifications for the purpose of the present study. The participants were given six open-ended questions addressing different aspects such as the teachers' perceptions of decision-making, the procedure they follow when they make a decision, the decision-making style they implement, and how they evaluate the outcomes of decision-making process. The open-ended questions were shared with the participants electronically through their email addresses.

Second, the current study carried out a semi-structured interview as a data collection tool since it was in harmony with our ontological and epistemological stances. We designed four questions to be raised in the interview and then asked those questions to eight EFL teachers, who have similar background as the participants of the present study, to observe whether pilot participants faced any problems in understanding and responding the questions. The pilot

participants were asked to voice their opinions on the questions used and state whether there should be some modifications. Accordingly, we prepared two questions to address various points such as their opinions on the relationship between teaching experience and decision making style and the effect of gender on decision making process. Each interview took around 10 minutes and they were all conducted in a meeting room in a comfortable manner. The interviews were recorded by using two different recording equipments and transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

As for the data analysis of the open-ended questions and the semi-structured interviews, the cyclical model of Creswell's (2012) inductive content analysis was used. Chinn and Kramer (1999) consider the inductive content analysis as an effective method in which researchers use bottom-up process by moving from small details to the general idea as a result of which they reach a general perception by associating these specific details. Creswell (2012) recommends the following crucial steps in coding the data collected: (1) Firstly, the transcriptions and texts should be examined closely to have a sense of the whole study. (2) Each text and transcription should be cut into pieces of information with their codes. (3) Each segment is required to be labelled. (4) In case of overlapping and a high number of codes, they should be reduced. (5) The texts and transcriptions, with the list of codes emerged, should be read again to find out whether new codes show up. Additionally, appropriate quotes from the participants that go along with the codes need to be determined. (6) As a final step, frequently stated codes need to be turned into themes to be clarified in details.

Two researchers were involved in data analysis process with the intention of getting reliable findings. Each researcher studied on the participants' answers individually by applying the above stated items carefully to ensure that the findings obtained are reliable. As a result of this individual analysis, the findings were compared and contrasted. The themes that were agreed by both researchers were decided to be explained in details while the themes that were not agreed by researchers were negotiated to decide whether they should be taken into consideration. Due to the nature of implementing a qualitative research design, the coding technique necessitated the establishment of inter-rater agreement that ensured the trustworthiness and validity of the research conducted when more than one researcher is involved in data analysis procedure. Walther, Sochacka and Kellam (2013) offer inter-rater reliability as a means of "continuous dialogue between researchers to maintain consistency of the coding" (p. 650). It was pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1994) that the inter-rater agreement of 80% between researchers involved in coding on 95% of the codes is a sufficient agreement among coders. For the present research, the formula described in Miles and Huberman (1994) was implemented and the inter-rater agreement between two coders was calculated as 85%.

The trustworthiness and credibility of results are some of main components of the high quality study in qualitative research. In this respect, we also used member checking for the validity of the study. Creswell (1994) considers member checking in a qualitative research as a useful technique to enhance the credibility, accuracy, validity and transferability of a study. The data obtained as a result of the instruments implemented were discussed with the participants to ensure the accuracy and mutual understanding.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Findings Related to the First Research Question

The research question aspired after investigating the EFL teachers' perceptions and views with regard to their decision-making process and as a result of the data analysis process, four main themes emerged as stated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Decision-making**

Perceptions of Decision-making	F	%
A careful consideration of the situation	4	67
Involvement of all the parties	4	67
Reacting to an undesired situation	4	67
Feeling responsible	2	33

As it could be observed in Table 1, one of the most frequently stated perceptions (67%) by the participants was that decision-making requires a careful consideration of the problematic issue. Participant 1 (P1) believe that decision-making process necessitates the person to think thoroughly about the benefits and harms that could be observed as a result of the decision taken depending on to what extent the problem effects the process of teaching and learning. The process also demands people to go back to the first phases of the desicion-making on the purpose of finding out a better option and maximize the existing resources. The following quotation exemplifies this:

The process of decision-making involves careful considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of the possible decision, and going back and forth if needed to come up with a more effective decision. Also, it means trying to make the best use of the resources available (P1).

Similarly, participant 2 stated that the teacher who decides about an issue should be able to evaluate the process with different perspectives and point of views so that he/she can deal with the matter in a more effective way considering the fact that decision-making process can be effected by the context, priority and significance of the issue. The following quotation illustrates this:

It requires a multidimensional thinking because as decision maker I need to approach to the issue from various aspects (P2).

Additionally, by agreeing with the idea of the necessity of a careful consideration to the issues, participant 3 also added that the decision taken should satisfy the needs and expectations of the parties involved in the matter. By admitting the fact that it may not be always possible to reach decisions making everybody happy, but he pointed out that necessary efforts should be shown to consider others' opinions and feelings. The following quotation exemplifies this:

It's a process that must involve thorough thinking and consideration to reach the best possible outcome that serves the best interest of the parties involved. But that's not always the case. Sometimes, hard decision must be made (P3).

Finally, participant 6 pointed out that decision-making is a questioning process that compels the decision taker to pay attention all alternatives with their possible outcomes and even reconsider the process after making a decision. She also added that it is not possible to

say that the decision taken is the correct or wrong one because of the complex nature of the process. The following quotations illustrate the theme:

When I make a decision, I question it and consider other alternatives, although it is sometimes too late. However, I like to think about what kind of result I could get with different alternatives. This helps me to see the situation from a different perspective (P6).

At first, I would like to tell my opinion about the decision generally. I do not believe in the correct decision or wrong decision since we cannot know what is correct or what is wrong. Every decision brings its own alternatives (P6).

Table 1 also confirmed that the EFL teachers associated the importance of involvement of all parties (67%) in the decision making process. In order to reach the best possible decision, most of the participants stated that the main problem should be defined clearly and the matter should be resolved by taking the stakeholders' emotional and cognitive perspectives into consideration with caution. The importance of reaching a consensus while making a decision was emphasized and indicated as a significant concept to create a win-win situation for all of the people involved. At this point, it was stated that collaboration and listening to others' opinions play an important role. Quotations from the following participants illustrate their views with respect to this theme:

I would define it as understanding the core problem, appreciating the feelings, thoughts and evaluations of the parties involved, considering possible ways of overcoming the conflict, and learning from the process itself for further experiences. I believe there is no effective decision making process without taking into accounts people's feelings, opinions and realities (P1).

If I am in a position to manage the problem, without ignoring the case I try to stay calm. I try to first ease and then listen to the conflicting parties. If possible, I take the conflicting parties to a more isolated environment to talk and resolve the issue as long as I am allowed to do so (P2).

It's the best way to overcome any kind of conflict concerning the parties involved with the best possible outcome, bearing in mind the greater good. The aim should be that all parties are as satisfied as possible in the end of the process (P3).

I guess the key is always listening the opinions of others whether it is your student, colleague or anyone that you work with so I always listen and show respect to others' opinions and then try to find a way to meet at the common point that can make everyone pleased but at the same time to the benefit of the institution (P4).

Table 1 also affirmed that participants correlated decision-making process with reacting to an undesired situation (67%). For example, participant 1 attached importance to the fact that the problems encountered should be resolved in a short time by using a systematical procedure. No matter whether the problems are expected or not, they needed to be reacted and fixed by trying to take a good decision. The following quotation exemplifies this:

I would define a problem as something undesired which emerges due to predictable or unpredictable things, and which can be fixed in a certain period of time through a systematic decision-making process (P1).

Additionally, participant 2 drew attentions to the importance of not causing another problem while making a decision to fix it. That's why the problems should be managed quickly and but at the same time mindfully. The following quotation illustrates this:

As an undesired occurrence, conflict requires to be managed and reacted instantly but carefully in order not to cause another conflict which will possibly make the situation worse (P2).

Finally, some participants pointed out that the problems occurring in the classroom have quite negative effects on students' learning process and they decrease the learners' motivation and increase the level of ambiguity. Due to these reasons, they believed that decision-making process serves as a reaction to overcome these undesired situations and ensures an appropriate environment for learning and teaching procedures. Quotations from the following participants illustrate their views with regard to this theme:

A problem is a situation that is usually unwelcomed and needs to be dealt with to overcome (P3).

I would define the problem as the situation which causes the learners' distraction of the learning concept, and undesired motive of the doubt, or ambiguity. When I don't know how to respond at the moment of the problem arousal, I quickly decide what to do and which principle I would apply at that moment (P5).

Table 1 finally verified that two participants (33%) associated decision-making process with the feeling of responsibility. They believed that teachers are responsible for causing a problem due to their lack of classroom management implementation, anticipating the problems and taking actions to deal with them by deciding what to do with the intent of solving the undesired situations. Quotations from the following participants illustrate their views with respect to this theme:

I feel, some way or another, responsible for the problem encountered, be it because of the feeling that I have not foreseen the possible problems or directly because of my inconvenient classroom management as the practitioner. I feel I am the one in charge of avoiding and preventing the problems (P2).

In a situation which enables the students make mistake the responsible person take the action regard to the problematic situation. In this scope, the teacher is the unit who takes the decision to decide what to do in a problematic moment (P5).

All in all, the participants of the current study believed that decision-making process necessitates a careful and systematic consideration to the problem, involvement of all stakeholders in the process, a reaction to the undesired situations occurring inside and outside the classroom and teachers' responsibility to prevent or overcome the problems.

### 3.2. Findings Related to the Second Research Question

The research question intended to determine how EFL teachers decide when they encounter a problem and as a result of the data analysis process, the decision-making styles preferred by the teachers could be seen in the table stated below:

**Table 2: Teachers' Preference of Decision-making Styles**

Decision-making Styles	F	%
Rational	3	50
Dependent	3	50

Table 2 clearly confirmed that the participants of the current study followed two different decision-making styles in the general sense. Firstly, 3 participants (50%) mainly relied on rational decision-making style. They believed that using logical assumptions and reasons while deciding on an issue provide them with a good ground to persuade people in that the decision taken is a good one. Additionally, depending on the significance of the situation, one of the participant expressed that logic is an irreplaceable concept in decision-making process. Quotations from the following participants illustrate their views with regard to this theme:

I trust logical assumptions more than others. Because if there is logic in whatever decision I make, I can convince people that it is a good decision (P1).

If it is an issue related to my professional life, I decide trusting my logical assumptions (P2).

It depends on the severity of the situation and the impact of my decision, but a common factor for me is that there always has to be logic in the decision made (P3).

Secondly, half of the participants preferred implementing dependent decision-making style. For example, participant 1 attached importance to the necessity of listening and collaboration suggesting that before making a decision, she usually prefers listening to others and taking their opinions. One of the most important reasons behind this preference was the attempt to reach a consensus on the purpose of ensuring the satisfaction of all stakeholders. The following quotation illustrates this:

I guess the key is always listening the opinions of others whether it is your student, colleague or anyone that you work with so I always listen and show respect to others' opinions and then try to find a way to meet at the common point that can make everyone pleased but at the same time to the benefit of the institution. Listening and collaborating are keys that help my decision making process (P4).

In addition to that, two participants stated that consultation and experience serve as useful factors in decision-making process in that they can reach constructive outcomes as a result. Quotations from the following participants exemplify their views with regard to this theme: In this respect, I respond to the problem in a wright way. For instance, when I encounter a problem in the classroom, I usually consult to the other teachers to ask about their opinions (P5).

I value experience and consultation. Thus, I ask my colleagues' opinion when I encounter a problem and can't solve it (P6).

Additionally, the participants were also asked whether they need to follow other decision-making styles or not. According to the analysis of open-ended questions and the semi-structured interviews, it was confirmed that spontaneous style was not referred while there were just 2 participants stating that they very seldom postpone making decisions and one participant expressing that he sometimes combine rational and intuitive styles. Four participants affirmed that they never postpone taking decisions. Two participants stated that they postpone their decisions if the issue is insignificant or it requires more time to understand clearly. Quotations from the following participants exemplify their views with regard to this point:

I sometimes postpone my decisions. First, if I need to understand the problem more clearly. Secondly, maybe the parties will attempt to solve it without my involvement. Thirdly,

if the problem doesn't affect people or things that much, I postpone it to make a more effective decision not during the process of teaching and learning but at the end of it (P1).

Sometimes I postpone the decision-making process when the problem goes away without taking a step (P6).

Only one participant mentioned the usage of intuition in conjunction with rational style by differentiating his personal and professional lives. The following quotation from participant 2 illustrates this:

I guess I make reference to both my logical assumptions and my intuitions. Based on my intuitions and what my logical assumptions tell me, I try to evaluate the issue appeared, and come up with a decision. That is if it is a family issue, which bares more emotionality, I am more likely to decide trusting my intuitions, if it is an issue related to my professional life, however, I decide trusting my logical assumptions.

### **3.3. Findings Related to the Third Research Question**

The research question aspired after investigating whether the EFL teachers' decision-making styles differ depending on their gender and teaching experience. As for the gender issue, as a result of the data analysis process of open-ended questions, it was clearly confirmed that all men relied on the rational decision-making style while all women had a tendency to the dependent decision-making style.

As for the relationship between teaching experience and decision-making process, as a result of the analysis of semi-structured interviews, it was confirmed by all the participants that teaching experience has a determining effect on the decision-making procedures. The teachers had a consensus suggesting that as teachers can anticipate the problems before they occur and can come up with better alternative to the problems which result in more constructive consequences both for the teachers and learners. For example, participant 1 pointed out that the strong relationship between teaching experience and decision-making process can be maintained if teachers reflect upon the issues and take a lesson out of the problems they encounter. Additionally, he attached importance to the fact that teachers with teaching experience tend to predict what may happen within and outside the teaching environment so that they can prevent undesired behaviors or situations. Following quotations from the participant 1 exemplify this point:

I think there is a strong and positive correlation between teaching experience and decision-making style, but on condition that we reflect on our teaching practice and learn as much as possible from it.

The more teaching years one has, the better decisions he/she can take based on his/her previous decisions. Those with longer teaching experience may tend to predict some possible situations inside or outside the class and take necessary decisions even before they occur. This preventive approach is surely gained through experience.

Furthermore, participant 2 mentioned the mutual effect between decision-making and teaching experience by stating that teachers think analytically as they gain experience in teaching. Thanks to analytical thinking, teachers become a part of problem solution process and have higher level of satisfaction through involvement in solutions. The following quotations from participant 2 illustrate this:

I think there is a reciprocal relationship. The more teachers have teaching experience, the more analytical becomes the decision making process.

Therefore, my experience of thinking analytically, trying to be a big part of solution rather than being a part of the problem, feeling positive about solving an existing problem effect my decision making style somehow in all my life.

Similarly, participant 3 believed that teachers' decision-making skills get better as they gain experience in teaching and stated that teachers at the beginning of their academic journeys have some difficulties in reaching good decisions. He also claimed that through experience teachers grow mature which results in more beneficial outcomes. The following quotations from the participant 3 exemplify his views with regard to this theme:

Of course, when teachers start their career, they have little experience and so is their decision-making ability, but by time both get better.

I think it depends on the kind of situation I'm deciding on but as I previously mentioned, the decision making process improves with experience and maturity. That includes making decision as a teacher.

In addition, participant 4 drew attention to the importance of collaboration with the learners with regards to teachers' decision-making abilities. The communication with students provide the teachers with many opportunities to spend time with people from different cultures, learn to deal with various learning styles and strategies that effect teachers' decision-making skills in a positive way. Following quotation from the participant 4 exemplifies this point:

I think teaching experience effects the way I make a decision because while communicating with our students, we get accustomed to different cultures. We deal with different characteristics, learning styles, attitudes, immediate problem solving issues and many others that might help us in our working culture.

In addition to that, participant 5 pointed out that teachers take decisions relying on their prior knowledge and experience. Another point discussed by the participant 5 with regard to the benefits of teaching experience on decision-making process is that experienced teachers can fix the problem in a shorter period of time while it takes longer for inexperienced teachers to come up with solutions to the problems encountered. In this respect, it is believed that being exposed to classroom management issues helps teachers react more appropriately and effectively. The following quotation from the participant 5 illustrates this point:

Teaching experience effect the way the teacher makes a decision. The teacher decides what to do in a situation based on her/his previous experiences. Experienced teachers can make easy decisions while unexperienced teachers have difficulty in deciding in a time constrain. Experienced teachers can get instinctive reactions in a difficult time, by analyzing and considering the situation while inexperienced teachers first define the problem, then take the action considering various external factors. Inexperienced teacher doesn't have enough experience in which they expose situations and react spontaneously.

Similarly, participant 6 considered the importance of experiencing similar situations on the possibility of taking more successful actions towards the unwelcomed matters. She remarked a positive correlation between having experience in teaching and better decision-making skills. Following quotation from the participant 6 exemplifies this point:

I definitely believe that there is a connection between teaching experience and decision-making. As time passes and similar situations begin to occur, the probability of seeing the next step increases and making a safer choice to minimize or solve the problem gets easier.

To summarize all the interpretations stated by the participants, gender and teaching experience have a clear effect on decision making. While the men rely on rational decision-making style, the women tend to use dependent decision-making style. However, in terms of teaching experience, there is a consensus among the participants suggesting that teachers with more teaching experience tend to make better decisions with more successful and effective consequences compared to the inexperienced teachers.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The current study aimed at investigating the EFL teachers' perceptions of their decision-making procedures and finding out which decision-making styles they implement when they come across a problem within and outside of the classroom. Additionally, the present study intended to explore whether gender and experience in teaching have a determining role in their decision-making styles and preferences.

As a consequence of data analysis process of open-ended questions, it was confirmed that EFL teachers consider decision-making process as a careful consideration of the situation, involvement of all the parties, reacting to an undesired situation and feeling responsible for the problems emerged and their outcomes. The data analysis process also affirmed that 3 participants generally preferred using reasons and logic in their decisions while other 3 participants tended to rely on consulting others' opinions. The participants that used rational decision-making style were all men while the ones using dependent style were all women. It confirmed that gender had an influential role with regards to the style preferred. The analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed that all of the participants believed that teaching experience is a determining factor in decision-making process suggesting that the more experienced the teachers are, the more successful and effective decisions they can take. That means there is a positive correlation between teaching experience and decision-making process of EFL teachers involved in this study.

#### **5. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of the present study have revealed some significant similarities and differences with the previously conducted studies in the literature. For example, when we compare the current study with the research done by Gray (1992), we can confirm that men rely on their logical assumptions and reasons when they are involved in decision-making process. However, as for the difference, women participants in the current study prefer the dependent style rather than relying on their intuitions. The studies conducted by Russ, McNeilly and Comer (1996) and Galott, et al. (2006) are also align with the current study as decision-making process is associated with good performance in job and intentional reactions towards undesired situations.

The present study clearly demonstrated that decision-making process constitutes a significant basis for teaching and learning as well as the managerial facilities as it is an integral part of the planning phase. It should not be forgotten that teachers and school leaders take lots

of decisions that determine the success or failure of the teaching organization. That is why teachers' decision-making process should be investigated thoroughly. Relying on the consequences of the current study, below stated recommendations can be made for further research that will be applied in the future:

1) A similar study can be conducted at state universities to observe whether there is a similarity with regard to the findings between private and state universities.

2) The researchers can study with a higher number of participants working at higher education level in different regions of Turkey to have a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions and views about decision-making process.

3) Considering the significant effects of decision-making on teaching and learning process, it should be emphasized in pre-service teacher education as well as in-service education on the purpose of raising teachers' awareness in this respect.

4) The outcomes of decision-making process should be investigated and the way EFL teachers evaluate these outcomes needs to be analyzed and studied to create a more constructive setting for more effective decision.

## REFERENCES

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C. K. & Walker, D. (2014). *Introduction to research in education* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Wadsworth.

Babcock, R. L., & Salthouse T.A. (1990). Effects of increased processing demands on age differences in working memory. *Psychology and Aging*, 5 (3) (1990), pp. 421-428, [10.1037/0882-7974.5.3.421](https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.5.3.421)

Baiocco, R., Laghi F. & D'Alessio M. (2009). Decision-making style among adolescents: Relationship with sensation seeking and locus of control. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32 (4), pp. 963-976.

Balçıkanlı, C. (2010). Learner autonomy in language learning: Student teachers' beliefs. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35, 90–103.

Blanchard-Fields, F. (2007). Everyday problem solving and emotion. An adult developmental perspective. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16 (2007), pp. 26-31, [10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00469.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00469.x)

Borg, S & Alshumaimeri, Y. (2019). Language Learner Autonomy in a Tertiary Context: Teachers' beliefs and practices. *Language Teaching Research*, 23 (1), pp. 9-38.

Bruine de Bruin, Parker, A. M., & Fischhoff, B. (2007). Individual differences in adult decision-making competence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (5) (2007), pp. 938-956, [10.1037/0022-3514.92.5.938](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.5.938)

Charles, S., & Carstensen, L. (2010). Social and emotional aging. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 383–409. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100448>.

Chinn P.L. & Kramer M.K. (1999) *Theory and nursing a systematic approach*. Mosby Year Book, St Louis.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). [\*Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches\*](#). CA: USA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Publishing.

Deniz, M.E. (2004). A research on investigation of the relationship between self-esteem decision making styles and problem solving skills of university students in decision making. *Journal of Educational Research*, 15: 23-35.

Duong, T.M. (2014). EFL teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy and their classroom practices: A case study. *International Journal of Education and Management Engineering*, 4, 9–17.

Epstein, S. (1994). Integration of the cognitive and the psychodynamic unconscious. *American Psychologist*, 49(8), 709–724. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.49.8.709>.

Eren, E. (2003). *Management and organization (contemporary and global approaches)*. Istanbul: Beta Printing and Publishing.

Evans, J. S. B. (2008). Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 255–278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093629>.

Galotti, K. M., Ciner, E., Altenbaumer, H. E., Geerts, H. J., Rupp, A., & Woulfe, J. (2006). Decision-making styles in a real-life decision: Choosing a college major. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41(4), 629–639. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.03.003>.

Gray, J. (1992). *Men are from Mars, women are from Venus: A practical guide for improving communication and getting what you want in your relationships*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Kennedy, Q., & Mather, M. (2007). *Aging, affect and decision making*. In K. D. Vohs, R. F. Baumeister, & G. Loewenstein (Eds.), *Do emotions help or hurt decision making? A hedgefoxian perspective* (pp. 245–265). New York, NY: Russel Sage Foundation.

Koçel, T. (2001). *Business management*. Istanbul: Beta Printing.

Kuzgun, Y. (1992). Decision strategies scale: Development and standardization. *VII. National Psychology Congress Scientific Studies*, Ankara. pp: S161-170.

Lengkanawati, N.S. (2016). Teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and its implementation in Indonesian EFL settings. In: R. Barnard, & J. Li (Eds.), *Language learner autonomy: Teachers' beliefs and practices in Asian contexts* (pp. 134–149). Phnom Penh: IDP Education.

Loo R. (2000). A psychometric evaluation of the General Decision-Making Style Inventory. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29 (5), pp. 895-905.

Marco, C.D., P.J. Hartung, I. Newman & P. Parr. (2003). Validity of the decisional process inventory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63(1): 1-19. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-8791\(02\)00018-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-8791(02)00018-0).

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (Second Edi). Sage Publications.

Nakata, Y. (2011). Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy: A study of Japanese EFL high school teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 900–910.

Nardi, H. A. & Wales, E. C. (1985). *Teaching decision making with guided design*. In A.L. Costa (Ed.), *Developing minds: A resource book for teaching thinking* (pp. 222-225). Alexandria VA: ASCD.

Osman, M. (2004). An evaluation of dual-process theories of reasoning. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 11(6), 988–1010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/BF03196730>.

Parker, A. M., Bruine de Bruin, W., & Fischhoff, B. (2007). Maximizers versus satisficers: Decision-making styles, competence, and outcomes. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 2(342–350), 1010. 989404.

Peters, E., Hess, T. M., Västfjäll, D., & Auman, C. (2007). Adult age differences in dual information processes: Implications for the role of affective and deliberative processes in older adults' decision making. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2(1), 1–23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2007.00025.x>.

Russ, F. A., McNeilly, K. M., & Comer, J. M. (1996). Leadership, decision making and performance of sales managers: A multi-level approach. *The Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 1–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40471636>.

Scott, S.G. & Bruce, R.A. (1995). Decision-making style: The development and assessment of a new measure. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 55 (5), pp. 818-831.

See Priem, R. (1994). 'Executive Judgement, Organisational Congruence and Firm Performance', *Organisational Science*, August, 421–32.

Sinclair, M., Ashkanasy, N. M., & Chattopadhyay, P. (2010). Affective antecedents of intuitive decision making. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 16(3), 382–398. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jmo.16.3.382>.

Sloman, S. A. (1996). The empirical case for two systems of reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(1), 3–22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.119.1.3>.

Thunholm, P. (2004). Decision-making style: Habit, style or both? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36(4), 931–944. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(03\)00162-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(03)00162-4).

Thunholm, P. (2004). Decision-making style: Habit, style or both? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36 (4), pp. 931-944.

Verhaeghen, P., Marcoen, A., & Goossens, L. (1993). Facts and fiction about memoryaging: A quantitative integration of research findings. *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 48(4), 157–171. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/geronj/48.4.P157.24R>.

Walther, J., Sochacka, N. W., & Kellam, N. N. (2013). Quality in interpretive engineering education research: Reflections on an example study. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 102(4), 626–659. <http://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20029>

Wehrich, H. and Koontz, H. (1993). *Management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Woods, N. F. & Calanzaro, M. (1980). *Nursing research: Theory and practice*. St Louis: Mosby.