



A Yogic Model of Decision-Making: Integrating Rajyoga Meditation with Corporate Leadership

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Abstract

Decision-making is central to corporate leadership, yet prevailing theories have largely framed it as a rational or behavioural process. While models such as Subjective Expected Utility, Prospect Theory, and bounded rationality have advanced understanding, they often underrepresent inner capacities such as awareness, detachment, and values orientation. Recent research on mindfulness and other contemplative practices highlights their potential contribution to leadership by strengthening attention and emotional regulation. However, traditions rooted in Indian philosophy, particularly Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga meditation, remain under explored in management scholarship.

This article proposes a conceptual framework—the Yogic Model of Decision-Making—that integrates Rajyoga meditation with organisational leadership theory. Grounded in principles of soul-consciousness, detachment, and connection with higher values, the model identifies five mechanisms—self-awareness, emotional regulation, detachment, intuition, and values orientation—through which Rajyoga practice can enhance clarity, reduce cognitive bias, and foster ethical judgement. By linking contemplative psychology with decision-making theory, the framework suggests that corporate leaders can move beyond narrow rational-analytical paradigms towards more holistic, ethical, and sustainable decision-making. The article outlines practical implications for leadership development, organisational culture, and professional training, and highlights directions for future empirical research, including cross-cultural and comparative studies.

Keywords

Rajyoga meditation; decision-making; corporate leadership; executive functions; contemplative practices; spiritual psychology; ethical judgement; values-based leadership; organisational decision-making; mindfulness and beyond

Introduction

Decision-making is a defining competency of corporate leadership. At operational levels, decisions are oriented towards immediate problem-solving, while at senior levels they involve long-term strategy, innovation, and resource allocation. As managers move up the organisational hierarchy, their approach to decision-making must evolve from tactical responses to strategic judgement (Brousseau et al. 2006). Existing theories—including rational choice, bounded rationality, and behavioural models—have advanced understanding of managerial decisions, yet they underrepresent dimensions such as inner awareness, detachment, and values-driven judgement.

Recent scholarship on contemplative traditions suggests their potential to complement leadership theory. Mindfulness research, for example, demonstrates positive effects on attentional control and emotional regulation (Good et al., 2016). However, mindfulness is only one strand of contemplative practice. Other traditions rooted in Indian philosophy remain under explored despite their promise for leadership contexts.

This paper advances Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga meditation as a theoretical lens for reimagining decision-making. Unlike mindfulness, which centres on non-judgemental awareness of the present moment, Rajyoga emphasises soul-consciousness, detachment from ego, and alignment with universal values. These principles may foster clarity, reduce bias, and strengthen ethical reasoning. The article proposes a conceptual framework—the Yogic Model of Decision-Making—identifying five mechanisms (self-awareness, emotional regulation, detachment, intuition, values orientation) through which Rajyoga practice enhances clarity, reduces bias, and deepens ethical judgement.

Decision-Making in Organisations: Existing Theories

Organisational decision-making has been studied through multiple theoretical perspectives. Rational models such as Subjective Expected Utility (SEU) and Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT) assume systematic evaluation of alternatives to maximise outcomes. Prospect Theory added behavioural nuance by showing how perceptions of gains and losses shape choices under risk. Complementary frameworks emphasise intuition, rules-based reasoning, and value analysis, broadening the scope of decision strategies (Swami, 2003).

Research on executive functions highlights underlying cognitive and emotional capacities: planning, organising, strategising, managing attention, and regulating emotions. These functions, including self-talk and reflective thinking, directly shape decision quality. Yet, while these models account for cognitive evaluation, they also show that humans frequently rely on heuristics, fall into systematic errors, and make decisions unconsciously. Critically, decision-making ability is strongly tied to mental state, but existing theories offer limited guidance on how to enhance such states (Sharma, 2019).

Contextual perspectives further enrich the picture. Citroen (2009) showed that executives integrate external information into structured processes of preparation, analysis, specification, and implementation. In Indian corporates, Rangaraj (2011) identified decision paths shaped by cost, peer pressure, and technology, while Usha (2004) highlighted organisational culture and communication in shaping joint decision-making.

Neuroscientific studies emphasise attentional control. Brefczynski-Lewis et al. (2007) demonstrated that long-term meditators sustain attention under distraction more effectively than novices. Reviews of meditation research (Sun, Yao, Wei, & Yu, 2015) show improvements in working memory, emotional regulation, and cognitive control—capacities essential to sound judgement. Workplace perspectives (Agrawal & Sahota, 2020) suggest that meditation may enhance harmony and reduce negativity, although such claims remain conceptually rather than empirically grounded.

Together, these studies provide rich insights but leave a gap: they often neglect the inner psychological states that influence clarity, ethical reasoning, and bias reduction. This gap invites exploration of Rajyoga meditation as a resource for leadership decision-making.

Rajyoga Meditation: Philosophical and Psychological Foundations

Rajyoga meditation, as taught by the Brahma Kumaris, rests on three interlinked principles:

1. **Soul-consciousness** – the self is experienced as a being of peace and awareness, distinct from transient roles or ego identities.
2. **Detachment** – not indifference, but freedom from excessive emotional investment, allowing impartial evaluation.
3. **Connection with the Supreme** – a relational dimension wherein practitioners draw strength and guidance from a higher source of wisdom and values.

Psychologically, these principles manifest through mechanisms relevant to leadership:

- **Clarity of thought** – quieting mental noise sharpens cognitive processing.
- **Reduction of cognitive bias** – detachment loosens unconscious conditioning.
- **Ethical grounding** – alignment with universal values strengthens moral reasoning.

Unlike mindfulness, which emphasises non-judgemental present-moment awareness, Rajyoga actively employs thought to reframe perspectives and incorporates a transcendent connection with the divine. This positions it uniquely to influence not only attentional control but also ethical clarity and value-driven judgement.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The Yogic Model of Decision-Making integrates Rajyoga meditation with organisational leadership theory. The model proposes that Rajyoga practice initiates five interrelated mechanisms—self-awareness, emotional regulation, detachment, intuition, and values orientation—which in turn enhance decision-making outcomes such as clarity, reduced bias, and ethical judgement.

Pathways of the model:

- Rajyoga Meditation → Self-awareness → Recognition of motives and biases
- Rajyoga Meditation → Emotional regulation → Stability under pressure
- Rajyoga Meditation → Detachment → Impartial evaluation of options
- Rajyoga Meditation → Intuition → Access to non-analytical insights
- Rajyoga Meditation → Values orientation → Ethical and sustainable choices

Conceptual Framework: Pathways from Rajyoga Meditation to Enhanced Decision-Making

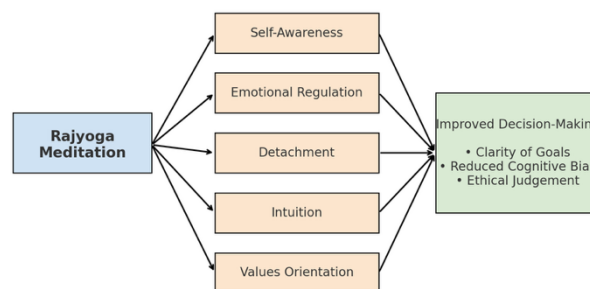


Figure: Proposed conceptual model illustrating how Rajyoga meditation enhances decision-making through mediators such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, detachment, intuition, and values orientation.

The theoretical contribution of this framework lies in its integration of spiritual psychology with decision-making theory. Whereas existing models emphasise cognitive constraints or behavioural biases, the Yogic Model suggests that contemplative training can expand leaders' inner capacities, enabling more holistic, ethical, and sustainable decisions.

Practical Implications

The model has implications across multiple domains:

- **For corporate leaders:** Rajyoga can be incorporated into leadership training and executive coaching programmes to cultivate inner stability, sharpen judgement, and enhance ethical reasoning.
- **For HR and organisations:** Structured meditation interventions may be embedded into wellness and leadership development initiatives, supporting cultures of mindful, values-driven decision-making.
- **For yoga practitioners:** Rajyoga teachers and facilitators may adapt interventions specifically for professional contexts, highlighting competencies such as clarity under pressure, ethical decision-making, and resilience.

Future Research Directions

As a conceptual proposal, the Yogic Model requires empirical testing to validate its assumptions and mechanisms. Future research may pursue the following directions:

- **Empirical testing:** Quantitative and qualitative studies examining how Rajyoga practice influences decision-making processes and outcomes in corporate settings.
- **Cross-cultural validation:** Comparative research across Indian and Western organisational contexts to assess the model's universality and cultural specificity.
- **Comparative studies:** Investigations contrasting Rajyoga with mindfulness and other contemplative traditions to evaluate unique versus shared contributions to leadership decision-making.

Such research will be essential for refining the model and establishing its credibility within management and organisational psychology.

Conclusion

Decision-making in organisations is both cognitively demanding and ethically charged. Classical theories and meditation research have advanced understanding but often neglect the inner capacities that underpin clarity and ethical judgement. Rajyoga meditation offers a holistic framework that integrates cognition, emotion, intuition, and values.

The proposed Yogic Model of Decision-Making suggests that contemplative training can expand leadership capacity beyond rational or behavioural constraints, enabling ethical and sustainable decisions. This article contributes to management scholarship and yoga studies by highlighting spiritual psychology as an untapped resource for leadership theory and practice.

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