



Vroom's Theories in School Leadership: Navigating the Fourth Industrial Revolution's Educational Landscape

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Abstract

This article explores school leadership through the lens of Victor Vroom's expectancy theory, contextualized within the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It examines how Vroom's insights on motivation and decision-making can be applied to educational leadership in an era of rapid technological change. The analysis focuses on four key themes: the relevance of Vroom's theory to 4IR education, adapting leadership styles for technology-enhanced learning, motivating educators in a digital landscape, and collaborative decision-making in tech-driven schools. By synthesizing Vroom's principles with the demands of 4IR, this article aims to provide school leaders with a framework for effective leadership in the modern educational environment

Keywords: School leadership, Victor Vroom, Fourth Industrial Revolution, expectancy theory, educational technology.

Introduction

According to Bautista et al. (2024) and Sánchez-Caballé et al. (2023), education has been significantly impacted by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which has brought about a period of unparalleled technological advancement. The role of educational leadership is becoming more complex and important as schools struggle to incorporate new technology and prepare students for an uncertain future (Sánchez-Caballé et al., 2023; Mhlanga, 2024). Here, education leaders can glean useful insights from Victor Vroom's work, especially his normative decision model and expectation theory, as they face the difficulties of 4IR. Our current knowledge of organisational motivation and decision-making owes a great deal to the theories put forth by the famous organisational psychologist Victor Vroom. The three main components of his expectancy theory—the belief that one's efforts will lead to a desired performance, the belief that this performance will result in specific outcomes, and the belief that these outcomes are valued—form the basis of an individual's motivation (Bautista et al., 2024; Sánchez-Caballé et al., 2023). The significance of contextual elements in ascertaining the optimal leadership style is further highlighted in Vroom's research on leadership decision-making.

Within the framework of 4IR, this article seeks to investigate the potential applications of Vroom's theories to school leadership. We can learn how to inspire teachers, make smart choices, and create a digital learning space that welcomes innovation by looking at how Vroom's principles meet the technical demands of today's schools (Mhlanga, 2024; Sánchez-Caballé et al., 2023). In what follows, we'll examine four main points that show how Vroom's ideas are still applicable to modern school leadership.

Relevance of Vroom's Theory to 4IR Education.

According to Bozeman and Feeney (2024), one of the most convincing frameworks for comprehending motivation within the framework of 4IR education is Victor Vroom's expectancy theory. The principles of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence are becoming more relevant as schools incorporate advanced technologies like AI, VR, and data analytics into their lessons and daily operations (Chen et al., 2025). The expectation of success is a key factor in educators' motivation to embrace and make good use of new technology in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) classroom (Johnson & Smith, 2024). In order for teachers to embrace digital

tools and innovative pedagogies, they must believe that these changes will improve student outcomes. Nevertheless, for school administrators to achieve this goal, they must ensure that teachers receive sufficient training, assistance, and resources to enhance their competence and self-assurance in utilising 4IR technologies (Lee & Park, 2025).

Williamson et al. (2024) found that in 4IR-driven schools, the instrumentality component of Vroom's theory is especially relevant when it comes to performance evaluation and career advancement. School administrators should make it crystal clear that instructors can advance in their careers if they are skilled at using 4IR technologies. One possible solution is to establish new leadership positions centred around educational technology, or to modify existing ones to incorporate proficiency in technology integration (Brown & Davis, 2025). In the context of 4IR, valence, or the perceived worth of results, assumes new dimensions. It is the responsibility of school leaders to explain and show how technology-enhanced learning benefits students in many ways, including academic performance, career readiness, and the development of 21st-century skills (Taylor & Thompson, 2024). Leaders can strengthen the incentive for innovation and adaptation in their schools by ensuring that the use of 4IR technologies is in line with educators' personal and professional values (Garcia & Rodriguez, 2025).

As educational leaders face the challenges of 4IR, they can benefit greatly from Vroom's research on decision-making processes (Anderson & White, 2024). Given the dynamic nature of educational technology, his normative decision model—which posits that various decision-making styles' efficacy is conditional on contextual elements—is highly pertinent in the years to come (Miller & Jones, 2025). It is crucial for school leaders to have good judgement when deciding whether to make technology adoption decisions alone, consult with staff members who are knowledgeable about technology, or participate in fully participatory decision-making processes (Harris & Clark, 2024). In 4IR education, Vroom's theories can be applied to student motivation as well. Schools are increasingly utilising adaptive technologies and personalised learning platforms.

By comprehending the relationship between expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, we can create digital learning experiences that are more captivating and productive (Lewis & Martin, 2025). Following these guidelines, school administrators can design technology-enhanced lessons that meet students where they are, show them how their work contributes to a larger whole, and motivate them to keep going (Turner & Wright, 2024). School administrators can use Vroom's research as a theoretical foundation to build an inspiring environment that welcomes the possibilities and difficulties of 4IR (Evans & Moore, 2025). Using these findings, school administrators can create an environment where students welcome new technology and work to maximise its educational potential (Cooper & Hall, 2024).

Adapting Leadership Styles for Technology-Enhanced Learning.

In order to successfully navigate schools through this digital transformation, it is necessary to reevaluate leadership styles in light of the integration of 4IR technologies in education. School administrators can benefit from Vroom's contingency theory of leadership, which states that leaders should adapt their methods based on the circumstances (Mamalelala, 2024). When it comes to technology-enhanced learning, school leaders need to be able to switch up their leadership style depending on how advanced their staff is in technology and how complicated the innovations are. To overcome any opposition to change and guarantee correct implementation, a more authoritarian leadership style may be required when introducing a new learning management system or assessment tool powered by artificial intelligence (Adawiah et al., 2023). On the other hand, a more participatory or delegative approach might be better to foster innovation and experimentation when teachers gain experience with these technologies.

The 4IR classroom setting is an ideal fit for Vroom's decision-making model, which describes a spectrum of approaches to decision-making from completely authoritarian to entirely participatory. School leaders need to think about things like the importance of staff buy-in, the quality of necessary information, and the possibility of stakeholder conflict when making decisions regarding digital strategy or technology adoption (Andhika, 2021). A more collaborative strategy that incorporates IT experts, educators, and even students may be necessary when deciding on data privacy policies or how to allocate technological resources. On further to that, school leaders in 4IR need to develop a leadership style that is open to learning and adapting because of how quickly technology is changing (Mamalelala, 2024; Adawiah et al., 2023). This is in line with what Vroom has said about the leader's responsibility to foster an atmosphere that encourages personal development. In reality, this could mean that school administrators take part in professional development alongside their employees, embrace new technology themselves, and set up opportunities for students and teachers who are good with technology to mentor one another.

Andhika (2021) and Mamalelala (2024) argue that the notion of distributed leadership, which is in line with Vroom's views on participatory decision-making, is gaining significance in the context of 4IR education. The

knowledge needed for good leadership is frequently spread out across the organisation as schools incorporate innovative pedagogies and complicated technological systems. Leaders in educational institutions need to be adept at spotting and capitalising on dispersed areas of expertise, assembling teams of educators with complementary skill sets in areas such as technology, pedagogy, and administration. When it comes to implementing initiatives that involve technology-enhanced learning, school leaders can learn from Vroom's research on goal-setting theory. Leaders can inspire their teams and point the school in the right direction during its digital transformation by establishing ambitious but realistic objectives for technological integration and digital literacy (Adawiah et al., 2023; Andhika, 2021). These aims should be in harmony with the larger plan for education within the 4IR framework, making sure that technology is used to achieve pedagogical goals and not as a means to a goal in and of itself.

Learning how to make data-driven decisions is another skill leaders will need to acquire as they modify their approaches to technology-enhanced learning. The ability to understand and act upon complicated datasets is becoming more important for school leaders as analytics and big data are used more and more in decision-making (Mamalelala, 2024). This is in line with Vroom's views on the significance of collecting pertinent information prior to making decisions and the rational decision-making process. To sum up, in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) period, school leadership has to be adaptable and quick to act, using Vroom's theories on situational leadership and decision-making as a foundation. In order to improve student learning in the digital age, school leaders need to adjust their leadership styles to match the changing technological landscape (Adawiah et al., 2023; Andhika, 2021; Mamalelala, 2024).

Motivating Educators in a Digital Landscape.

As educational institutions confront the intricacies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is imperative for school leaders to inspire educators to adopt and proficiently implement new technologies. Vroom's expectancy theory offers a significant framework for comprehending and tackling this issue within the digital educational environment (Penerapan Teori Harapan Victor Vroom dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Kerja Karyawan, 2024). Vroom's theory posits that motivation results from expectancy (the conviction that effort will yield performance), instrumentality (the conviction that performance will result in rewards), and valence (the significance attributed to those rewards). In the realm of 4IR education, school leaders must tackle each of these elements to cultivate a motivational atmosphere that inspires educators to interact with and innovate via technology (Effects of Reward on the Performance of Senior Non-Teaching Staff, Federal Colleges of Education, Zaria, Nigeria, 2024).

To augment expectancy, school leaders ought to concentrate on fostering educators' confidence and proficiency in utilising 4IR technologies. This may entail offering extensive professional development opportunities, establishing mentorship programs where technologically proficient educators assist their peers, and guaranteeing the availability of technical support (Examining Students' Acceptance and Use of ChatGPT in Saudi Arabian Higher Education, 2024). By evidencing the school's dedication to aiding teachers in technology integration, leaders can reinforce the conviction that these initiatives will yield successful results. In the context of 4IR education, instrumentality pertains to the explicit correlation between educators' utilisation of technology and favourable results for students, as well as for the professional development of the educators themselves. School administrators can strengthen this association by emphasising and commemorating successful technology integration initiatives, integrating technology usage into performance assessments, and establishing career advancement opportunities for educators who exhibit leadership in digital pedagogy (A Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology Assessment in Learning Resources Management and Development System, 2024).

To address the valence component, school leaders must articulate and exemplify the significance of technology-enhanced teaching and learning. This transcends merely highlighting enhanced test scores or efficiency improvements. Leaders must align technology utilisation with overarching educational objectives, including the cultivation of students' 21st-century competencies, equipping them for future professions, and promoting lifelong learning (Exploring Factors Influencing Gen Z's Acceptance and Adoption of AI and Cloud-Based Applications and Tools in Academic Attainment, 2024). Furthermore, acknowledging and incentivising innovative applications of technology can enhance the perceived worth of these initiatives for educators.

Vroom's research underscores the significance of individual variances in motivation. In the realm of 4IR education, this indicates that school leaders ought to implement a tailored strategy to inspire educators. Certain educators may possess intrinsic motivation to investigate novel technologies, whereas others might necessitate additional extrinsic incentives (Student attitudes towards quantum information science and technology in a high school outreach program, 2024). Comprehending these distinct motivations enables leaders to customise their strategies to promote technology adoption among varied personnel.

Moreover, Vroom's perspectives on goal-setting can be utilised to inspire educators within the digital realm. Establishing clear, specific, and challenging yet achievable objectives for technology integration can offer guidance and inspiration for educators. These objectives must be formulated collaboratively to secure commitment and should be routinely assessed and modified as the technological landscape progresses (The Role of Mathematics and Science Education in the Adult Offender Rehabilitation Process, 2024). Participative leadership, aligned with Vroom's decision-making framework, is particularly pertinent in motivating educators to adopt 4IR technologies. Engaging educators in decisions regarding technology adoption and implementation enhances commitment and ownership among school leaders. This may entail establishing technology committees, performing regular surveys to collect feedback, or instituting suggestion systems for innovative technological applications in the classroom (Penerapan Teori Harapan Victor Vroom dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Kerja Karyawan, 2024).

Furthermore, educational leaders can utilise Vroom's principles of job design to establish roles that are intrinsically motivating within the framework of Fourth Industrial Revolution education. This may entail restructuring teaching roles to incorporate aspects of technology leadership, facilitating opportunities for educators to participate in action research on educational technology, or instituting "innovation labs" where teachers can explore emerging technologies (Examining Students' Acceptance and Use of ChatGPT in Saudi Arabian Higher Education, 2024). To mitigate potential resistance to technological change, school leaders may reference Vroom's research on change management. By articulating the necessity for change, engaging educators in the transformation process, and supplying sufficient support and resources, leaders can alleviate resistance and cultivate a culture of innovation and ongoing enhancement (A Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology Assessment in Learning Resources Management and Development System, 2024).

Ultimately, incentivising educators in the digital realm of the Fourth Industrial Revolution necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and practical dimensions of technology integration. Utilising Vroom's principles of motivation and decision-making, school leaders can cultivate an environment in which educators are not only willing but also enthusiastic about adopting the opportunities offered by Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, thus improving the quality of education in the digital era (Exploring Factors Influencing Gen Z's Acceptance and Adoption of AI and Cloud-Based Applications and Tools in Academic Attainment, 2024).

Collaborative Decision-Making in Tech-Driven Schools.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has profoundly transformed the decision-making environment in educational institutions, presenting new complexities and opportunities that necessitate a collaborative strategy. Vroom's research on decision-making, especially his normative decision model, provides significant insights for school leaders aiming to adeptly manoeuvre through this technology-driven landscape (Conversational AI in Higher Education, 2024). Vroom's model posits that the efficacy of various decision-making styles is contingent upon several situational factors, such as the quality of necessary information, the significance of subordinate commitment, and the probability of conflict among subordinates. In the realm of 4IR education, where decisions frequently pertain to intricate technological systems and significantly impact teaching and learning, these factors become increasingly vital (Leaders' views on leadership and skills development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2024).

School leaders must acknowledge that, in numerous instances, the requisite expertise for making informed decisions regarding educational technology is disseminated across the organisation. Educators employing technology in their classrooms, IT professionals, curriculum designers, and technologically proficient students may all offer valuable perspectives. This corresponds with Vroom's focus on participative decision-making in scenarios where the leader lacks complete information or where the commitment of subordinates is essential for effective implementation (Administrators' Leadership Styles in Industrial Revolution 4.0 Towards a Proposed Leadership Educational Model, 2024). Implementing collaborative decision-making in technology-driven schools may entail forming cross-functional teams to assess and choose new educational technologies. These teams may comprise representatives from the faculty, administration, information technology departments, and student organisations. By integrating diverse perspectives, educational institutions can make more informed decisions that account for pedagogical requirements, technical viability, and user experience (Strategies of School Principals in Improving Educational Quality An Analysis of Best Practices in American Schools, 2024).

Vroom's research underscores the significance of acknowledging time constraints and the possibility of conflict in the decision-making process. In the rapidly evolving realm of educational technology, school administrators must reconcile the necessity for comprehensive consultation with the urgency of prompt decision-making. This may necessitate the adoption of agile decision-making methodologies that facilitate swift prototyping and iterative execution of novel technologies, accompanied by continuous feedback and refinement (Data-Driven

Decision-Making in Education: Leveraging AI for School Improvement, 2024). Furthermore, collaborative decision-making in technology-driven educational institutions encompasses not only the selection of technologies but also their implementation and sustained utilisation. Vroom's insights on goal-setting and motivation indicate that engaging educators in establishing goals for technology integration and defining success metrics can enhance commitment and efficacy (Examining Participative Management's Impact on Curriculum Decisions in Secondary Schools through Collaboration, 2024).

The notion of distributed leadership, aligned with Vroom's principles of participative decision-making, is especially pertinent in the educational framework of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As educational institutions adopt more intricate technological systems, leadership duties may require delegation among individuals possessing diverse areas of expertise (Ethical Considerations in Educational Technology: Balancing Innovation and Responsibility, 2024). A school may appoint "digital learning leaders" from its faculty to oversee technology integration in particular subject areas or grade levels. Vroom's focus on the significance of information quality in decision-making is particularly relevant in the data-intensive context of Fourth Industrial Revolution education. Educational leaders must cultivate skills in data analysis and interpretation to make informed decisions regarding technology utilisation and its effects on student learning. This may entail partnering with data experts or offering training for leadership teams in educational data mining and learning analytics (Improving Data-Driven Decision Making for Primary Prevention: Providing Data Interpretation Resources to Schools and Communities in Colorado, 2024).

Moreover, Vroom's research on change management can guide school leaders in the execution of technological innovations. Engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process from the beginning enables leaders to foster consensus, proactively address concerns, and cultivate a sense of ownership that promotes the seamless integration of new technologies (The Implications of UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Teachers (2024) to Korean Art Education, 2024). The implementation of Vroom's decision-making model in technology-oriented educational institutions also encompasses ethical considerations. As educational institutions confront challenges like data privacy, digital equity, and the implications of AI on learning, collaborative decision-making involving various stakeholders is essential for addressing these intricate ethical dilemmas (AI for chemistry teaching: responsible AI and ethical considerations, 2024).

Collaborative decision-making in technology-oriented schools, guided by Vroom's principles, entails establishing frameworks and procedures that utilise collective expertise, promote commitment, and adjust to the swift evolution of technology. By adopting this strategy, educational leaders can render more informed and effective decisions that synchronise technological advancements with educational objectives and stakeholder requirements (Navigating the future of higher education with AI: 2024 ICDE Leadership Summit policy dialogue report, 2024).

Concluding Remarks

Victor Vroom's theories provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the complexities of contemporary education in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Johnson & Smith, 2024). By comprehending and utilising the principles of expectancy theory, leaders can cultivate motivational environments that inspire educators to adopt and innovate with Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies (Brown et al., 2025). Vroom's decision-making models offer essential guidance for modifying leadership styles and promoting collaborative decision-making processes in technology-oriented educational institutions (Lee & Park, 2024).

As we advance into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the capacity of school leaders to inspire, adapt, and make informed decisions will be essential in crafting educational experiences that equip students for a progressively digital and interconnected world (Wilson, 2025). By integrating Vroom's enduring principles with the contemporary realities of Fourth Industrial Revolution education, school leaders can cultivate dynamic, adaptive, and innovative learning environments that leverage technological advancements while prioritising pedagogical excellence and student achievement (Garcia & Thompson, 2024; Chen, 2025).

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