

Decision-Making and Personality Difficulties among College Students

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Decision-making and personality's difficulties may be affected by problem solving and decision-making skills of individuals. College students lacking problem solving and decision-making skills tend to experience more difficulty in decision-making. Various studies show that career decision making difficulties are related to environmental and individual characteristics such as negative beliefs related to choice of education factor personality traits. **Objectives:** To assess the decision-making and personalities difficulties of college students. **Method:** This study intends to elaborate upon difficulties in Decision-Making and Personality Difficulties among college of Students Patna district with different locus of control. 312 girls, 221 boys totaling 533 participants involved in research located in Patna. **Results & Conclusion:** The findings show that undecided students found more difficulties in making career decisions than their decided counterparts. They have good information about jobs/career, their own talents, abilities and capabilities to perform in particular field. Whereas, the undecided students lack confidence, have scarcity of information about jobs/career and show inability in knowing themselves for making relevant career decisions.

Keywords:

Decision-making, Personalities, Students, College, Difficulties

INTRODUCTION

Decision making can be defined as 'the selection of a course of action from among alternatives'. In this sense decision making is at the heart of planning: for plans to be formulated and implemented, decisions on certain courses of action have to be taken. Some commentators have even argued that decision making can be viewed as the most fundamental managerial activity of all. There are numerous barriers to effective decision-making. One of the most common biases that can confound decision-making is confirmation bias, the tendency for a person to pay attention to information that confirms her existing beliefs and ignore information that conflicts with these existing beliefs.

Barriers to Effective Decision-Making

- Bounded rationality: The concept that when we make decisions, we cannot be fully rational because we don't have all the possible information or the cognitive processing ability to make fully informed, completely rational decisions.
- Confirmation bias: The tendency to pay attention to information that confirms our existing beliefs and to ignore or discount information that conflicts with our existing beliefs.
- Escalation of commitment: The tendency of decision makers to remain committed to poor

decision, even when doing so leads to increasingly negative outcomes.

- Process conflict: Conflict about the best way to do something; conflict that is task-oriented and constructive, and not focused on the individuals involved.
- Relationship conflict: Conflict between individuals that is based on personal (or personality) differences; this type of conflict tends to be destructive rather than constructive.

The decision-making process

Most models of decision making include six essential steps that it is recommended managers should follow when making decisions.

- Identify and diagnose the problem.
- Identify alternative solutions.
- Evaluate alternatives.
- Choose an alternative.
- Implement the decision.
- Evaluate the decision.

The term personality is used in a number of ways including the apparent features of a person. However, psychologists use it to refer to the characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and acting. By characteristic pattern we mean the consistent and distinctive ways our *ideas, feelings and actions are organized*.

Personality refers to those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feelings, thinking, and behaving (Pervin, Cervone, & John, 2005,

p. 6). Personality is the organized, developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems (Mayer, 2007, p. 14).

The Psychoanalytical Perspective

Freud proposed that psychological forces operate at three levels of awareness:

- **Conscious level:** The thoughts, feelings, and sensations that one is aware of at the present moment.
- **Preconscious level:** It contains information of which one is not currently aware, however, they can easily enter conscious mind.
- **Unconscious level:** It consists of thought, feelings, wishes, drives etc. of which we are not aware. It, however, influences our conscious level of activity.

The two other major difficulty categories, Lack of Information and Inconsistent Information, include types of difficulties that may arise during the actual career decision making process. Lack of Information includes four categories of difficulties: (a) lack of knowledge about the steps involved in the process, (b) lack of information about the self, (c) lack of information about the various alternatives (e.g., occupations, high school classes, college majors), and (d) lack of information about the sources of additional information. The major category Inconsistent Information includes three types of problems in using information: (a) unreliable information, that is difficulties related to unreliable or contradictory information (b) internal conflicts such as contradictory preferences or difficulties concerning the need to compromise; and (c) external conflicts i.e. conflicts involving the influence of significant others.

Personality is generally a synthetic amalgam of traits developed to different extents in different persons, and is known by the conduct, behavior, activities, movements and everything else concerning the individual. It is the way of responding to the environment. Personality may also be described as the way an individual adjusts to the environment. It is the sum total of physical, mental, emotional, social and temperamental make up of the individual. It is the essence of one's instincts, feelings, emotions, experience, habits, perception, memory, imagination and various ways of behavior. Hence, personality is the total of the distinctive characteristics of an individual, the stable and shifting patterns of relationship between these characteristics, their origins and the way. They interact to help or hinder the adjustment of a person to other people and situations.

Review of literature:

Career decision-making difficulties, also called as barriers or career choice problems, have been described as any factors that thwart the achievement of career goals (Crites, 1969). Career decision-making difficulty is a problem or group of problems that may contribute

to an inability to make a career decision, or an incorrect career decision. (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996)

The taxonomy (Gati et al., 1996) includes three major difficulty categories that are further divided into ten specific categories. The first major category, *Lack of Readiness*, includes three categories of difficulties that may arise before the beginning of the career decision-making process: (a) lack of motivation to engage in the career decision-making process, (b) general indecisiveness concerning all types of decisions, and (c) dysfunctional beliefs, including irrational expectations (Nevo, 1987) concerning the career decision-making process (e.g., "I believe there is only one ideal career for me").

Objectives

The present research was based on the following objectives:

- To assess the decision-making skill difficulties of college students
- To find out personality difficulties of college students.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference in career decision-making difficulties among decided and undecided students.
- There is no significant difference in personality pattern among decided and undecided students.

Method

Population: Government college of Patna

Sample size: The total sample comprised 533 college students studying in randomly selected four Governments college included 221 boys and 312 girls

Instruments Used

Career Decision-Making Inventory (Singh, 1999)

The Career decision-making inventory was used in the present study to measure the status of an individual in career decision making process. The inventory consists of 18 items, 5 for decidedness scale and 13 for indecision scale. This inventory is composed of two subclasses: Decidedness Scale (items 1-5) provide a measure of the degree of Decidedness in having made a decision about a career. Indecision Scale (items 6-18) is a measure of career Indecision. The test retest reliability coefficients for career decidedness scale and career indecision scale were found to be .97 and .94 respectively. The criterion related with career decision scale (Osipow, 1986) yielded significant coefficients of correlation of .69 and .59 for career decidedness scale and career indecision scale respectively.

Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (Osipow, S., Gati, I., & Krausz, M., 1996):

The Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) is composed of 34 items which require a self-rating. These 34 items are of the Likert type and response ratings range from 1 to 9, with a rating of 1 indicating low similarity of the student to the item and a rating of 9 indicating high similarity.

Big Five Inventory (John, 1990)

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a self-report inventory designed to measure the Big Five dimensions. It is quite brief for a multidimensional personality inventory (44 items total), and consists of short phrases with relatively accessible vocabulary. The Big Five are five broad factors (dimensions) of personality traits. They are: Extraversion (sometimes called Surgency). The broad dimension of Extraversion encompasses such more specific traits as talkative, energetic, and assertive. Agreeableness includes traits like sympathetic, kind, and affectionate. Conscientiousness includes traits like organized, thorough, and planful. Neuroticism (sometimes reversed and called Emotional Stability) includes traits like tense, moody, and anxious. Openness to Experience (sometimes called Intellect or Intellect/Imagination) includes traits like having wide interests, and being imaginative and insightful.

Results and Discussion

Mean, S.D's and 't' values were worked out to find significant differences on major and sub-categories of career decision-making difficulties of decided and undecided. The results for career decision-making difficulties of decided (391) and undecided (114) are presented for personality pattern of decided and undecided. The scores of career decision-making difficulties and its categories in case of decided and undecided students. On the first major category, Lack of Readiness, significant 't'- ratios were observed in case of lack of motivation (5.96) at 0.01 level; general indecisiveness (2.48) at 0.05 level and on total lack of readiness (3.97) at 0.01 level of significance favoring undecided students. In case of dysfunctional myths, t-ratio (1.62) was found to be insignificant. The mean scores of undecided students (5.83) is higher than the decided students (5.36). It reveals that the undecided students found more difficulties due to lack of readiness in making career decisions. The second major category, Lack of Information, t-ratios was found to be 9.02 which at 0.01 level of significance. On the sub-categories, significant t-ratios at 0.01 level of significance were observed in case of lack of knowledge about career decision-making process (7.49), lack of information about self (7.99), occupations (8.07) ways of obtaining additional information (8.22). The mean scores on major category lack of information of undecided students (6.11) is higher than the decided students (4.27) which shows that undecided students found more difficulties in obtaining information about self, occupations and ways of obtaining additional information. The third major category, Inconsistent Information, t-ratios was found to be 9.64 which at 0.01 level of significance. On the sub-categories, significant t-ratios at 0.01 level of significance were observed in case of unreliable information (8.76), internal Conflicts (7.65); external conflicts (8.26) and total lack of information (9.64). The mean scores of undecided

students (5.42) are higher than the decided students (3.60) on the major category of inconsistent information. On the variable, career decision-making difficulties, significant t-ratios at 0.01 levels were found to be 8.78. Hence, there exists significant difference between decided and undecided students on the variable career decision-making difficulties. The results of the present study indicate that undecided students found more career decision-making difficulties due to lack of motivation, taking general decisions, obtaining information about self, occupations, ways of obtaining additional information, about career decision-making process and found inconsistent information due to unreliable information, internal/external conflicts as compared with their undecided counterparts.

The null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in career decision-making difficulties among decided and undecided adolescents was not accepted in the present study. The results reveal that undecided students found more difficulties in obtaining information about their capabilities, talents, different occupations, career alternatives. Whereas decided students are certain to career decision-making, having confidence in attaining challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them.

Discussion based on reveals the scores on the personality pattern of decided and undecided students. The variable of personality comprises five personality traits namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. The results obtained are presented as under: Extraversion: When decided and undecided students were compared on the variable of extraversion, no significant difference was found between the decided and undecided groups. Agreeableness: On the variable of agreeableness, significant 't' ratio (5.09) at .01 level of significance was in favour of decided group. The value of mean in case of decided and undecided group was 3.71 and 3.45 respectively. It indicates that in the present study, decided group were more sympathetic, kind and affectionate as compared to the undecided group. Conscientiousness: On the variable of conscientiousness, significant 't' ratio (8.30) at .01 level was in favour of decided group. The mean score was 3.53 in case of decided group and 3.06 in case of undecided group. It indicates that decided students were more organized, thorough and planful than their undecided student counterparts. Neuroticism: On the variable of neuroticism, significant 't' ratio (2.76) at 0.01 level was in favour of decided group. The mean score for decided and undecided group were 2.98 and 3.17 respectively. This shows that undecided students are more neurotic than decided students. Similar results were reported by Haraburda (1998) who found that the subject who scored high in decisiveness were less neurotic and had fewer psychological symptoms that did those who were indecisive. Kelly and Pulver (2003)

also identified a career indecision type labeled neurotic indecisive information seekers who were characterized by significantly more anxiety and general negative affect than the other three types generated. Openness: When decided and undecided students were compared on the variable of openness, significant difference was found at 01 level of significance (5.15). The value of mean and standard deviation of openness in case of decided group were 3.62 and 0.45 respectively while in case of undecided group it was 3.36 and 0.59 respectively. It means that decided group were more imaginative and having wider interests as compared to undecided group.

Based on the results, it was found that the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in personality pattern among decided and undecided adolescents was accepted in case of extraversion and not accepted in case of agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness in the present study.

Conclusions:

The present study highlighted comparison between decided and undecided decision-making difficulties and personality among students. The findings show that undecided students found more difficulties in making career decisions than their decided counterparts. They have good information about jobs/career, their own talents, abilities and capabilities to perform in particular field. Whereas, the undecided students lack confidence, have scarcity of information about jobs/career and show inability in knowing themselves for making relevant career decisions. Hence, undecided students require proper guidance and counseling, reliable information related to career, and analysis of the personality to choose a particular career. In the present investigation, Arts group faced more career decision-making difficulties as compared to medical, non-medical and commerce groups while medical students faced least difficulties as compared to other academic groups. Firstly, need for directive guidance is required for difficulties related to lack of readiness. Secondly, in addressing the difficulties due to lack of information, a computer assisted career guidance system may prove to be effective in increasing exploratory behavior (Mau, Calvert, & Gregory, 1997), group discussions and individual sessions should also be provided in reducing career indecision. For students reporting difficulties due to inconsistent information, counseling professionals may consider value clarification or counseling sessions. Thus, interventions should be tailored to the specific career choice difficulties of adolescents sort. It is recommended that career development in schools should encompass introduction of career awareness activities in elementary level, career exploration in the high school level and career preparation in the secondary level. This would help reduce gender stereotypes, root out dysfunctional beliefs, enhance

awareness of their own self, occupations and career decision making process, promote decision making skills and overall generate confidence in the students to make informed, rational and make appropriate career decisions during secondary level. Hence a proper diagnosis of career decision-making difficulties and personality may provide an insight into the counselee's problems and help in counseling strategies. The results of this study are believed to contribute to practice related to career decision-making difficulties. It would be effective for psychological counselors working in the field to consider the locus of control as a variable that may affect difficulties students' experience in career decision-making. This study shows that career decision-making difficulties will be influenced by the fact that students have either internal or external locus of control as a personal trait. In addition, this present study will contribute to the literature in case it is performed on a larger sample

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