



Perfectionism, Decision-Making, and Life-Satisfaction among Working Professionals

Ritika Bhatt* & Vishal Yadav**

*M.A. Psychology Student

Indira Gandhi National Open University

Email: ritikabhatt2010@gmail.com

**Guest Faculty, Department of Psychology

Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwa Vidyalaya

Email: vishalbhu1992@gmail.com

Abstract

Perfectionism and decision-making have been receiving attention in workplaces for many years. Perfectionism is considered a positive attribute of an employee. However, there is another side of perfectionism also, which can lead to severe mental and physical health problems. In the same way, decision-making is routine organizational practice, which is considered an essential

attribute of personality. Life satisfaction also indicates the apparent quality of life and indicates mental and physical health. It also shows how well people thrive. Working professionals can be described as individuals earning their living through employment. Such individuals generally value specific skills or degrees which help them perform specific tasks efficiently. Working professionals can be full-time, part-time, or self-employed. Some examples can be teachers, lawyers, doctors, designers, etc. The current study was intended to explore the relationship between perfectionism, decision-making, and life satisfaction among working professionals. The sample of this study is 40 working professionals between the age of 20-30 years. Standardized scales are used to measure perfectionism, decision-making, and life satisfaction. The results showed a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and decision-making. Also, the study found a negative correlation between life satisfaction, decision-making & perfectionism. The outcomes of the current study will help employers and human resource management practices look for their employees' mental and physical health.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Decision Making, Life Satisfaction, Working Professionals

Introduction

"Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be your best. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live, look, and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgment, and shame. It is a shield. It is a twenty-ton shield that we lug around thinking it will protect us when, in fact, it's the thing that's preventing us from flight." - Brene Brown.

Increasing competition among working professionals for promotion and salary hikes is widespread. For many years, perfectionism has been the center of attraction in clinical and personality psychology. However, more research is needed about the role of perfectionism among working professionals and their life satisfaction. As a personality type, perfectionism can be characterized as striving for perfection, having very high expectations for themselves, and then judging one's actions (Flett & Hewitt, 2002a; Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Satisfaction can be considered a state of mind that refers to both 'enjoyment' and 'contentment'. Current synonyms related to life satisfaction are 'happiness' and 'subjective well-being'. Also, life satisfaction can be understood as an overall evaluation of life rather than focusing on present feelings and emotions. The first theory of decision-making was extensively reviewed and published in the Psychological Bulletin by Edwards (1954). Decision-making is about how people make choices among the various options. The study showed that processes of decision-making and outcomes are impacted by time pressure. Under high pressure, decision-makers are less satisfied with their decisions (Brown & Noussair, 2019). Working professionals are people engaged in a specific occupation or profession. Such people are responsible for making effective decisions for their organizations ranging from solving problems to managing teams which can lead to better productivity and profitability.

Perfectionism

Perfection is "the practice of demanding of oneself or others a higher quality of performance than is required by the situation" (Hollender, 1965). Burns (1980) defined people who "have beyond-reach standards, who hassle ceaselessly for unrealistic goals, and who compare their worth only

concerning abundance and achievements as perfectionists”. Research in support of perfectionism has shown that it is associated with psychopathology (Limburg et al., 2017).

In a study, it was found that there was a positive relation between socially prescribed perfectionism and signs of social isolation. On the other hand, self-oriented perfectionism was unrelated to signs of social detachment, while other-oriented perfectionism was exclusively tied to disputes. Hence, the outcomes showed that perfectionism should be considered in the context of teamwork (Kleszewski & Otto, 2020). Rigid perfectionism is defined as “demanding flawless performance from the self” (Smith et al., 2016). Putting forward negative responses and worrying about others that they want you to be perfect regardless of your poor performance can be described as self-critical perfectionism (Dunkley et al., 2003). The tendency to demand perfectionism from others in a grandiose, hypercritical, and entitled way can be defined as narcissistic perfectionism (Smith et al., 2016).

Decision-making

Decision-making is the process of selecting an option from many different alternatives to gain desired results (Eisenfuhr, 2011). The success of an organization is directly related to its decision-making. According to Baker et al. (2001), identifying administrator/s and contributor/s should be the first step of decision-making, which reduces the chances of conflict about problem definition, goals, requirements, and criteria. Identifying the issues, developing several options, assessing the alternatives, electing alternatives, implementing choice, and evaluating the decision's effectiveness make up the decision-making process. Decision-makers need to be more perfect and be able to make complex decisions due to bounded rationality (Lunenburg, 2010).

Finding and choosing possibilities consistent with one's beliefs and choices is a component of making decisions. Decision-making implies having choices to be considered, and in such a case, one wishes to choose several options but must choose the one that suits best according to his/her aims, wishes, aspirations, and beliefs (Harris, 1980). Findings have stated the relevance of generating alternatives is a crucial phase in providing advantages of prompt decision-making at the individual level. Also, it emphasizes on advantages of using "decision quality principles" and "being proactive" during this phase of decision-making in the life of ordinary people (Siebert et al., 2020).

According to Farland (2016), “a decision is an act of choice wherein an executive form a conclusion about what must be done in each situation. A decision represents behavior chosen from several alternatives.” Research conducted on healthcare employees shows a positive correlation between job satisfaction & life satisfaction. Also, sexual satisfaction and communication abilities mediate between employment & life pleasure (Üstgörül & Popescu, 2023).

Life-satisfaction

Life satisfaction can be defined as “a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life” (Diener et al., 2002). According to a study on satisfaction, job, and family satisfaction accounts for more variation in life satisfaction than working conditions (Near et al., 2017). Life satisfaction refers to “how much someone enjoys their life” (Diener et al., 1998). A person positively evaluating the overall quality of his/her life to a degree or the degree to which someone enjoys the living he/she is leading is called life satisfaction (Veenhoven, 1996). An

individual's personalized evaluation of their degree of contentment following their expectations is called satisfaction with life (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Life satisfaction is the cerebral component of personal happiness (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Research has found a strong correlation between life satisfaction and job satisfaction as well as four extrinsic motivators (salary, quality of work, management, and collaboration). However, the Correlation with promotion was negligible (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014).

Review of Literature

The view towards Perfectionism has changed over time, earlier it was seen as a single entity but now it is considered as a multifaceted entity. Before it was related to the negative personality trait but nowadays due to its multifaceted nature, it can be regarded as a positive as well as a negative trait. Similarly, the ability to decide is different for every individual hence; experts have introduced several types of making decisions. On the other hand, research and articles on life satisfaction are increasing day by day because research has shown good decision-making may result in more life satisfaction, especially in the workplace decision making plays an important role, there are positive and negative effects of good and bad decision making respectively.

According to Burns (1980), perfectionism is characterized by setting too high bars for one's own performance, which appears as an ongoing search for unrealistic goals. Striving for perfectionism can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, several disorders, and low self-esteem (Burns, 1980; Sassaroli et al., 2008). Individuals who exhibit strong perfectionist tendencies rarely remain satisfied, even if their requirements have been fulfilled instead, they can feel more driven toward establishing higher goals for the future (Mor et al., 1995; Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn, 2002). Perfectionism is said to be more noticeable in formal settings, especially in organizations (Slaney

& Ashby, 1996; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Because it is obvious that performances are generally rated and assessed in formal settings (Dunn et al., 2006; Mitchelson & Burns, 1998). It is directly related to wellness & contentment (Diener, 2000).

Adaptive perfectionism might result in higher levels of life satisfaction when it turns out to be linked to higher confidence (Ashby & Rice, 2002). In a comparative study on perfectionism and student life satisfaction of American and Croatian Students states that adaptive perfectionist students have better levels of life satisfaction than non-perfectionists (Gilman et al., 2005).

According to prior investigations, decisions taken in past times led to the present circumstances (Siebert et al., 2020). Studies in the past have shown that every person handles circumstances requiring decision-making differently, in addition to the differences in decision-making skills. These strategies, also referred to as decision-making styles, are frequently applied in many circumstances (Abubakar et al., 2019; Scott & Bruce, 1995). According to recent studies, optimists have been negatively impacted by a big range of options than satisfaction seekers are (Beja, 2019; Cheek & Goebel, 2020).

Purpose

The purpose is to study relationship between decision-making, life satisfaction, and perfectionism among working professionals.

Hypothesis

- There would be positive relationship between life satisfaction and decision-making.
- There would be positive relationship between decision-making and perfectionism

Method

Main objective of this study is to find out the correlation between Perfectionism, life-satisfaction and decision making among working professionals. A total of 45 working professionals participated in this study across India among which only 40 were fitted into the age criteria of 18-30 years.

Tools

The following tools were used to analyze each variable i.e., perfectionism, life-satisfaction and decision making respectively. All the below scales are reliable and used in several research.

1. **Big Three Perfectionism Scale (SF):** This scale is used as an instrument for the assessment of perfectionism. It is Produced by (Feher et al., 2020), which contains 16 questions, each evaluated on a Likert scale of six from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.
2. **The Satisfaction with Life Scale:** This instrument measures global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. SWLS was given by Diener et al. (1985). It is a short scale of 5 items, each scored on a Likert scale of 7 from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".
3. **Decision-Making Questionnaire:** DMQ developed by French et al. (1993) consists of 21 items. It is used as a short 21-item scale, each rated on a six-point Likert scale from "very infrequent" to "very frequent".

Procedure

The participants were informed of the scope of the study and completed questionnaires via Google form; Participants completed a standardized psychological test. All the participants were thanked for their participation.

Results

The Correlation was used to compare the participants' responses to determine the Correlation between life satisfaction, perfectionism, and making decisions among working professionals. The mean and standard deviation are shown in Table 1, and the Correlation between perfectionism, life satisfaction, and decision-making is shown in Table 2.

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard deviation of the sample.

	Perfectionism	Decision-Making	Life-Satisfaction
N	40	40	40
Mean	49.1	23.9	22.7
SD	12.4	6.14	5.42

Table 2

Correlation between perfectionism, Life Satisfaction, and decision-making

	Perfectionism	Decision-Making		Life-Satisfaction	
Perfectionism	—				

Decision-Making	-0.069	—			
Life-Satisfaction	-0.270	0.948	***	—	
<i>Note.</i> * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$					

Discussion

The findings of this study confirmed that in working professionals' life satisfaction and decision-making are positively correlated ($r=0.948$, $p < .001$) which shows that favorable decision-making lead to better life satisfaction as stated in first hypothesis. It is aligned with a study done on university students in which results showed a substantial correlation between life satisfaction and all decision-making styles (Deniz, 2006).

Also, it is clear from (Table 2) that life satisfaction and perfectionism have negative correlation ($r=-0.270$). However, the results were insignificant. This outcome gives insights into how continuous faultfinding about one's actions can lead to lesser life satisfaction repercussions which can harm physical and mental health because when someone hustles negligently, mental, and physical health gets affected adversely. As an essential move, incorporating perfectionism into organizational research, the previously existing research confirms the validity of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism while arguing for new terms which represent the conceptual basis of the traits instead of their correlations (Doty & Glick, 1994).

According to Parker et al., (2007) spontaneous decision-making results in unfavorable conditions, such decision-makers experience adversity in life which may reduce the life-satisfaction of individuals. Additionally, as shown in (Table 2) results of this study also found a

negative and insignificant correlation between decision-making & perfectionism ($r = -0.069$). In this regard, recent research on corporate teams also indicates that a leader's perfectionism affects team decision-making performance indirectly and negatively (Song et al., 2022).

Working professionals having high levels of perfectionism are urged to put more effort toward producing perfect outputs because according to them outstanding performance is crucial and must require (Childs & Stoeber, 2010; Tziner & Tanami, 2013). In this regard Hill et al. (2004) states that organizations had a favorable relationship with psychological disorder symptoms. Hence, future studies can explore the social and biological factors leading to perfectionism.

Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to find out the correlation between perfectionism, life satisfaction and decision-making of working professionals. From the above results findings, outcomes revealed a strong correlation between all three variables, stating that life satisfaction and decision making have significantly positive correlation, which is supported by research done by Finnegan (2021) who discovered a substantial adverse correlation between self-critical perfectionist behavior and fulfillment with life. Also, results of this study stated perfectionism is negatively correlated with decision-making and life-satisfaction. Hence, decision-making and perfectionism can be improved by setting realistic and achievable goals. Sometimes the fear of judgment or disapproval results in perfectionism but being confident about your work is equally essential. In the same way, life satisfaction is equally crucial for a healthy life; it can be improved through positive thinking, making social support, networking, or making friends, and goal setting. Similarly, decision-making can be bettered by learning from past mistakes and identifying

alternatives, understanding the pros and cons of various alternatives & hence, choosing the most suitable path, and finally taking actions.

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