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THE INTERPLAY OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG INDIVIDUALS

[1]**Manya Ambawatta,** Masters in Arts, Clinical Psychology

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

manyaamb@gmail.com

[2]**Dr. Pankaj Singh,** Assistant Professor

Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

psingh32@amity.edu

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to assess the relationship between decision making style and personality traits among individuals, while also investigating potential gender differences and the predictive role of personality traits in decision-making styles. A sample of 130 individuals, comprising 65 females and 65 males, aged between 16 and 34, was randomly selected using simple random sampling. Personality traits were assessed using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John and Srivastava (1999), while decision-making styles were measured using the Decision-Making Style Inventory by Scott and Bruce (1995). The findings showed that the Rational decision-making style exhibited

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

significant positive associations with Openness, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness personality traits, while the Avoidant style showed negative associations with Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and a positive association with neuroticism. The Intuitive style was positively related to Openness to experiences. The Dependent style demonstrated a positive relation with Neuroticism. The Spontaneous style exhibited a negative relation with Conscientiousness. The regression analysis revealed that Openness exhibited a positive effect on both rational and intuitive decision-making styles. Conscientiousness personality was found to have a significant positive effect on the rational style, while negatively impacting avoidant and spontaneous styles. Extraversion demonstrated a positive effect on the spontaneous style. Agreeableness was positively associated with the dependent style. Neuroticism exhibited positive effects on both dependent and avoidant styles. Females showed significant higher scores on dependent decision-making style compared to males. Whereas males exhibited a greater inclination towards spontaneous decision-making than females. Females also scored significantly higher than males in neuroticism personality trait.

Keywords: *Decision-Making Style, Personality Trait, Gender Differences, Predictive Role*

INTRODUCTION

Decision making plays an integral part in everyday life (Adair, 2010), where individuals are confronted with decisions that shape their present circumstances and future outcomes. Decision-making styles encompass the diverse approaches and strategies individuals employ when faced with choices or dilemmas (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Decision-making, by definition, “is the process of choosing an appropriate choice from all of the alternatives” (Uzonwanne, 2015). A person's decision-making style encompasses their

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

habitual patterns, attitudes, and tendencies when faced with choices or dilemmas. The effective elements (like personality traits and individual differences) that influence decision-making styles were explored by Scott and Bruce (1995). The authors defined decision-making style as “a habitual pattern individuals use in decision-making,” with this they also provided five distinctive decision-making styles. According to Scott and Bruce, individuals typically exhibit varying degrees of all five styles, however one is typically dominant in their decision-making approach (Allwood & Salo, 2012).

Mind-directed, dynamic regulation that is purposeful and intentional is what is known as rational decision making (Iran- Nejad & Gregg, 2001). This style emphasizes the use of reason and logic criteria rather than emotions or intuition in the decision-making process. Brain-directed, dynamic regulation that deals with day-to-day tasks is known as intuitive decision making (Iran- Nejad & Gregg, 2001; Epstein, 1990). This style relies on instinct, gut feelings, and past experiences rather than extensive analysis and logic. When something goes wrong, this mode is the first to react (Bowden & Jung- Beeman, 2003; Epstein, 1990). The dependent style involves relying heavily on input, support, advice, or guidance from others when making decisions. Individuals with this style lacks autonomy and seeks validation from others before deciding. Avoidant decision-making style is characterized by withdrawing, evading, postponing, or delaying decision-making altogether (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Spontaneous decision-making style is characterized by making judgments quickly, impulsively, and with a tendency to act on the spur of the moment decisions (Scott & Bruce, 1995).

The Latin word "persona," which means "mask," was the place where the word "personality" first appeared. A person's personality is made up of a variety of enduring and distinctive features that can shift depending on the circumstances (Parker et al., 2007). A person's unique cognitive patterns, feelings, social adjustments, and behaviors that they

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

consistently exhibit over time and that have a significant impact on their assumptions, self-concept, values, and behaviors can also be used to characterize their personality (Boyle et al., 2008). In the discipline of psychology, personality traits are represented by several models. The Five-Factor Model (FFM), commonly known as the Big Five, provides a useful framework for examining how personality traits shape decision-making tendencies (John & Srivastava, 1999). It is a well-liked and widely accepted model which describes individual personality traits. The Big Five model incorporates 5 broad dimensions of personality. Each of these dimensions represents a spectrum along which individuals vary in their characteristic behaviors and dispositions (Goldberg, 1990). These five personality qualities are collectively referred to by the term OCEAN (Matthews et al., 2003).

*Extraversio*n refers to the intensity and inclination with which individuals seek social interaction and engagement with their surroundings. It characterizes an individual's degree of assertiveness, activity, enthusiasm, talkativeness, warmth, energy, and dominance. *Agreeableness* reflects how people approach and interact with others. As opposed to extraversion, which places more emphasis on pursuing relationships, it is concerned with an individual's orientation and social interactions. *Conscientiousness* is the capacity to regulate one's urges and engage in goal-directed conduct. Hard work, perseverance, neatness, orderliness, responsibility, reliability, and goal-orientation are traits of conscientiousness. A person's worldview, which is defined by their *Neuroticism*, can reveal their level of emotional stability. It considers the likelihood that a person could find a given scenario difficult or frightening. While those with low neuroticism are typically more relaxed, self-assured, and content with themselves, those with high neuroticism frequently experience anxiety, insecurity, and self-pity. Intellectual curiosity, an active imagination, and a readiness to explore novel concepts and experiences are traits

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

of being *Open to new experiences*. The ability to "think outside the box" is one of its key elements. According to Berglund et al. (2015), those with narrower minds are typically less open-minded people. It is also defined by originality, curiosity, and ingenuity (Costa & McCrea, 1992).

Research on the impact of personality traits on decision-making styles has been a focal point in understanding individual behaviors and choices. Studies in the past have validated the significance of personality in many decision-making situations, including high-risk decision-making within a laboratory (Lauriola & Levin, 2001), career decisions (Chartrand et al., 1993). However, studies exploring this relationship within the context of gender differences are relatively scarce, particularly in the Indian setting. A study investigated the “Personality Influences on Decision- making” with a sample consisted of 200 male students only (Rani, 2023). This study aims to address this gap in literature by investigating how personality traits influence decision-making styles and whether gender plays a role in moderating this relationship among individuals in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Egbaria and Zaid (2023) investigated the relation between “big five personality traits and decision-making styles among Arab undergraduate students in Israeli universities.” The results demonstrated that spontaneous decision- making style had the lowest value and rational style had the greatest. Among the individuals, conscientiousness and agreeableness were the most prevalent personality qualities. The avoidant and rational styles were shown to be significantly correlated with every personality trait. Dependent style showed a positive correlation with neuroticism and agreeableness. Additionally, there was a negative

correlation between the avoidant style and openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion.

Kaur and Singh (2023) explored the "career decision making of adolescents in relation to personality traits." The findings showed no statistically significant difference in the degree of career Indecision among adolescents with extraversion and neuroticism personality traits, nor in the degree of career decidedness among those adolescents. On the variables of Career Decidedness and Career Indecision, there was not a significant relationship between Personality Traits and Gender.

Rani (2023) investigated the "Personality Influences on Decision-making." The findings showed a positive correlation between extraversion and decision self-esteem as well as vigilance. Conversely, neuroticism had a negative correlation with decision self-esteem but a positive correlation with panic, cop out, and complacency.

Soyer (2021) examined to identify the personality traits of college students that are meaningfully predicted by their decision-making styles and creative thinking abilities. The findings revealed no gender difference in the rational thinking styles of students, with female students thinking more intuitively than male students. The study's conclusion was that personality factors related to openness to experience significantly predict rational and intuitive decision- making styles.

Bayram and Aydemir (2017) conducted a study on "Decision-making styles and personality traits." The findings indicated that, except for neuroticism, the logical and intuitive styles were substantially correlated with four personality factors. There was a positive correlation between neuroticism and agreeableness and the dependent style. There was a negative correlation between the avoidant style and conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion. The spontaneous style was positively correlated with neuroticism and negatively correlated with agreeableness and conscientiousness. It was also found that

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

females had significantly higher scores on neuroticism and agreeableness personality traits as compared to men.

Bajwa et al. (2016) conducted a study on "Personality traits and decision-making styles among university students (Pakistan)". The findings demonstrated that rational decision-making is a product of conscientiousness. Compared to men, women had greater decision-making abilities.

Rahaman (2014) conducted a study on the "Personality and Decision-Making Styles of University Students." According to correlational analyses, the big five factors and decision-making styles have a connection.

Allwood and Salo (2012) conducted a study on Decision-Making Styles and Stress. The study examined the relationship between perceived stress and sleep quality, two markers of stress, and each of the five decision-making styles, rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous (Scott & Bruce, 1995) among administrative officers and investigators at three Swedish public authorities. The findings indicated a substantial correlation between increased perceived stress and less sleep and the avoidant style and, to a lesser extent, the dependent style.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between decision making style and personality trait among individuals.

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

Research Objectives

a) To examine the link between decision making style and personality trait among individuals.

b) To study the impact of personality trait on the decision-making style of individuals.

c) To examine the difference between the decision-making style and personality trait among males and females.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between decision making style and personality trait among individuals.
- The Big Five personality traits will predict different decision-making style.
- There will be gender difference in decision making style and personality traits.

Sample

A sample of 130 individuals, comprising 65 females and 65 males, aged between 16 and 34, was randomly selected using simple random sampling. The data was collected via online and offline questionnaire using google form and physical print outs, after asking for their consent. The demographic details of the participants consisted of questions like name, age, gender, educational qualification, and occupation.

Measure

Two tools were used to test the variables in the study.

The General Decision-Making Style Scale, developed by Scott and Bruce (1995). The inventory consists of 25 statements, with responses from a 5-point Likert scale (1 =

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Reliability: 0.94. The inventory measures 5 sub-scales. Scott and Bruce (1995) proposed the first four scales—rational, dependent, avoidant, and intuitive—but a fifth component structure, which included the spontaneous style, appeared during the instrument's evaluation. Although one style is typically prominent, individuals typically exhibit varying degrees of all five styles, according to Scott and Bruce.

Big Five Personality Inventory, developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The inventory consists of 44 items, with responses from a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Reliability: 0.7; Validity: 0.803 (all except agreeableness). The inventory measures five dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and Openness to experience. BFI scoring ("R" denoting reverse scored items): Neuroticism: 4, 14, 19, 29, 39, 9R, 24R, 34R; Agreeableness: 7, 17, 22, 32, 42, 2R, 12R, 27R, 37R; Extraversion: 1, 11, 16, 26, 36, 31R, 6R, 21R; Openness to experience: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 44, 35R, 41R, Conscientiousness: 3, 13, 28, 33, 38, 8R, 18R, 23R, 43R.

Data Collection

The data was collected from individuals living in Delhi and Noida, India with their consent and assurance of anonymity. Participants received a booklet comprising both the scales. Participants were given instructions by the researcher. The booklet also included a section on required demographic data. All the data was gathered in less than two months. Following the collection of data, each scale was scored, and the data was then imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. The study was descriptive in nature.

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

RESULTS

Table 1

Mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values of both scales

SCALES	DIMENTIONS	MEAN	SD	Min.	Max.
Decision-Making Styles	Rationale	19.66	2.948	12	**25**
	Intuitive	18.37	2.700	10	**25**
	Dependent	16.52	3.240	5	**24**
	Avoidant	13.73	4.044	5	**24**
	Spontaneous	14.68	3.242	7	**24**
Personality Traits	Openness	36.57	4.013	22	**46**
	Conscientiousness	30.72	4.863	16	**42**
	Extraversion	25.34	5.547	11	**39**
	Agreeableness	33.50	5.077	18	**43**
	Neuroticism	24.28	5.814	8	**38**
N (130)					

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

Table 2

Correlation between Decision-Making Styles and Personality Traits

	R	I	D	Av	S	O	C	E	Ag
Intuitive	.383*								
Dependent	0.113	0.138							
Avoidant	-.305*	0.008	.314**						
Spontaneous	-.212*	.181*	0.048	.409*					
Openness	.335*	.225	-0.08	-0.10	-0.09				
Conscientiousness	.416*	0.08	-0.08	-.510	-.300	0.154			
Extraversion	0.079	0.067	-0.136	-0.158	0.170	0.072	0.121		
Agreeableness	.208*	0.090	0.132	-.179*	-0.161	.205*	.393*	-0.009	
Neuroticism	**-0.140**	**-0.00**	**.280****	**.390****	**-0.022**	**0.039**	**-.333****	**-.334****	**-0.087**

**p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

Table 3

Regression Analysis Predicting Decision-Making Styles

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	**DEPENDENT VARIABLES**				
	Standardized Coefficients				
	Rational	Intuitive	Dependent	Avoidant	**Spontaneous**
Openness	0.279**	0.207*	-0.132	-0.056	**-0.054**
Conscientiousness	**0.361****	**0.043**	**-0.051**	**-0.426****	**-0.327****

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

Extraversion	**0.006**	**0.054**	**-0.026**	**-0.020**	**0.190***
Agreeableness	0.007	0.033	0.203*	0.021	**-0.026**
Neuroticism	-0.028	0.021	0.277**	0.246**	**-0.068**
R^2	0.249	0.057	0.124	0.319	**0.141**
F	**8.227**	**1.495**	**3.524**	**11.609**	**4.080**

**p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Table 4

T-test for Gender Difference

	FEMALE		**MALE**			
	MEAN	**SD**	**MEAN**	**SD**	**t**	**p**
Rationale	19.88	2.613	19.45	3.255	0.832	**0.407**
Intuitive	18.55	2.257	18.18	3.087	0.778	**0.438**
Dependent	17.17	3.272	15.86	3.097	2.340	**.021***
Avoidant	13.23	4.461	14.23	3.543	-1.415	**0.159**
Spontaneous	13.72	3.416	15.65	2.764	-3.528	**0.001****
Openness	36.78	3.859	36.35	4.181	0.610	**0.543**
Conscientiousness	30.98	4.840	30.45	4.909	0.630	**0.530**
Extraversion	24.42	6.174	26.26	4.708	-1.917	**0.057**
Agreeableness	34.15	5.173	32.85	4.932	1.475	**0.143**
Neuroticism	**26.69**	**5.382**	**21.88**	**5.234**	**5.171**	**0.001****

**p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between decision making style and personality trait among individuals. Decision-making styles of the participants were tested by filling out the General Decision-Making Style scale (GDMS), developed by Scott and Bruce (1995) and the participants personality traits by the Big five personality inventory (John and Srivastava, 1999). The first hypothesis of this research which posited a significant relationship between decision-making styles and personality traits among individuals, was supported by the data. To test this hypothesis the Pearson correlation coefficient was used (table 2). The highest positive correlation was observed between the Spontaneous and Avoidant styles, indicating a tendency towards impulsive and avoidant behaviors.

Conversely, a strong positive correlation was found between Agreeableness and Conscientiousness personality traits, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of these traits are more likely to exhibit cooperative and responsible decision-making tendencies. This result correlated with the study of Egbaria and Zaid (2023) who found that among the individuals, conscientiousness and agreeableness were the most prevalent personality traits. Additionally, the Avoidant decision-making style displayed the highest negative correlation with Conscientiousness personality trait, underscoring the reluctance of individuals with low conscientiousness to engage in systematic and organized decision-making processes.

Apart from extraversion and neuroticism, the Rational style exhibited significant positive associations with Openness, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness personality traits. Similarly, the Intuitive style was positively related to Openness to experiences, highlighting the tendency of individuals with higher openness to adopt intuitive and creative decision-making strategies. The Dependent style demonstrated a positive relation

with Neuroticism, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism may rely more on others when making decisions, possibly due to feelings of insecurity or anxiety. A previous study by Egbaria and Zaid (2023); Bayram and Aydemir (2017) also indicated similar results. Whereas, the Avoidant style showed negative associations with Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and a positive association with neuroticism. The Spontaneous style exhibited negative relation with Conscientiousness. Bayram and Aydemir (2017) also found that the spontaneous style was negatively correlated with conscientiousness and agreeableness.

The second hypothesis of this research, which proposed that Big Five personality traits would predict different decision-making styles, was confirmed through multiple regression analyses (Table 3). The Openness personality trait exhibited a positive effect on both rational and intuitive styles. This suggests that individuals with higher levels of openness to experiences are more likely to engage in both logical, analytical decision-making processes and intuitive, creative decision-making approaches. Similarly, Conscientiousness personality was found to have a significant positive effect on the rational style, while negatively impacting avoidant and spontaneous styles. This implies that individuals high in conscientiousness tend to favor structured, systematic decision-making methods while avoiding impulsive or haphazard approaches. Furthermore,

Extraversion personality demonstrated a positive effect on the spontaneous style. Additionally, Agreeableness personality was positively associated with the dependent decision-making style. Lastly, Neuroticism personality exhibited positive effects on both dependent and avoidant styles. These findings align with previous research by Soyer (2021); Bajwa et al. (2016); Bayram and Aydemir (2017); Riaz et al. (2012). The R^2 values indicates the percentage of variance in each decision-making style that can be explained by the five personality traits collectively. The F-statistics showed overall significance.

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

The third hypothesis of this research, which proposed gender differences in decision-making styles and personality traits, was examined using T-tests. The results as shown in table 4, revealed meaningful differences in two decision- making styles and one personality trait between genders. Interestingly, no significant gender difference was found in rational decision-making style, which is consistent with previous research findings by Soyer (2021). This suggests that both males and females exhibit similar tendencies towards logical and systematic decision-making processes, regardless of gender. However, notable gender differences were observed in two decision-making styles. Females (M=17.17) demonstrated a higher tendency towards dependent decision-making compared to males (M=15.86), with a significant difference observed at the 0.05 level. This indicates that females may rely more on others input and seek consensus when making decisions, reflecting a more cooperative and collaborative decision-making approach.

Conversely, males (M=15.65) exhibited a greater inclination towards spontaneous decision-making than females (M=13.72), with a significant difference observed at the 0.01 level. This suggests that males may be more inclined to make decisions quickly and impulsively, without extensive deliberation or consideration of alternatives. Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant gender difference in neuroticism personality trait, with females scoring significantly higher than males. This result is consistent with previous research by Costa et al. (2001) and Bayram and Aydemir (2017), who also found that females tend to have higher scores on neuroticism personality traits compared to males. Two key limitations of our study should be acknowledged. Firstly, its cross-sectional design impedes the establishment of causality between personality traits and decision-making styles. Although regression analyses offer insights into predictive roles, longitudinal studies are required to discern temporal relationships. Secondly, our study's age range, confined to 16-34-year-olds, limits generalizability. Future research should

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

employ longitudinal designs to explore causal pathways and include diverse age groups to understand decision-making evolution over the lifespan comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between decision making style and personality trait among individuals, while also investigating potential gender differences and the predictive role of personality traits in decision-making styles. The findings revealed various correlations between specific personality traits and decision-making styles. Regression analyses also revealed significant effects of specific personality traits on various decision- making styles. T-test revealed meaningful differences in two decision-making styles and one personality trait between genders. Females showed significant higher scores on dependent style compared to males. Whereas males exhibited a greater inclination towards spontaneous decision-making than females. Females also scored significantly higher than males in neuroticism personality trait. These gender differences underscore the importance of considering gender-specific tendencies in decision-making research and have implications for understanding decision-making behaviors in diverse populations.

Vol. 2, Issue 5 May 2024 ISSN: 2584-0142

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