Check for updates   Cite Us

Students' Perception of Decision-Making Styles at University Level in Punjab

Noor Ul Ain [*]   Abid Hussain Ch. [†]

Contents:

- Introduction
- Rational Decision-Making Style
- Objects of the Study
- Research Questions of the Study
- Methodology
- Discussion
- Recommendations
- References

Abstract: *The current study aims to investigate students' perceptions of decision-making styles carried out in Punjab. All the students from the education department/institute of the government universities were the population of the study. For this purpose, seven universities which offer B.Ed. (Hons.) the program was selected randomly, and students (last semesters) were the study participants. The data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The instrument's reliability was 0.72. Results show that students have different perceptions regarding the styles carried by them. Most of the students are carried avoidant decision-making styles. At the same time, dependent decision-making styles were considered to be the least. Furthermore, a significant difference was not found between female and male students' perceptions of styles. It is recommended that universities offer courses to improve/develop effective skills because improved education assists students in making the right decisions at the right time in various realms of life and deciding on a better future.*

Introduction

Making a decision is an internal activity with exterior consequences. According to the literature, Among the most important aspects of a person's everyday life is decision-making, as well as decisions that are rarely made in a stress-free atmosphere (Cooper, Worthy, Gorlick, & Maddox, 2013). According to Leykin and DeRubeis (2010), decision styles are referred to as "stable trait-like patterns of approach to conditions that call for a decision". The decision-making style is described as the way to process and evaluate the information whenever an individual is compelled to make a decision (Verma & Rangnekar, 2015).

As previously stated, decision-making styles have evolved over time. Thus according to Strough, Parker, and Bruine-de-Bruin (2015), decision-making is like contextualised practice. Accordingly, decision-making is influenced by both the immediate and sociocultural contexts (e.g., the preferred choice, other people's intentions, and time restrictions). Individual variations in age and personality, for example, have a significant impact on individual decisions. The significance of

[*] PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Pakistan. Email: noorulain01@gmail.com *(Corresponding Author)*
[†] Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Pakistan.

decision-making styles is in their ability to reveal information about the decision maker. Researchers seek an understanding of how people differ in making decisions (Scott & Bruce 1995), how satisfied people are with their decisions (Crossley & Highhouse 2005), and how people make better decisions (Parker & Fischhoff 2005).

There are various measures of decision styles be existent; even though the styles frequently mix, a few distinct styles have been determined by Harren (1979), Leykin and DeRubeis (2010), Mann, Burnett, Radford, and Ford (1997). As illustrated by Driver, Brousseau, and Hunsaker (1990), various decision-making styles are constructed based on the number of options to be considered as well as the quantity of information about the options. Scott and Bruce (1995) emphasised some major styles carried by the individuals. They focused on the cognitive styles of individuals and found different categories of the decision-maker.

As per Scott and Bruce (1995), "Decision-Making Style" is a learned, habitual responding pattern that prefers by an individual to demonstrate in a decision context, instead of a personality trait and presumed Individuals as defined by a conjunction of styles instead of a single style. The general decision-making styles (GDMS) include five styles, rational, intuitive, spontaneous, avoidant, and dependent styles. Following are the details of the styles:

Rational Decision-Making Style

It indicates that rational decision-makers foresee the need to make decisions and prepare for them by gathering pertinent knowledge about themselves and their surroundings. For that, such people, the main way of gathering and processing information is systematic and focused on diverse sources, i.e. internal and external (Thunihohm, 2004). According to Nield (2018), rational styles, although a laborious but eventually profitable technique because it's provides a detailed overview of all alternatives.

Intuitive Decision-Making Style

Patton (2003) described three types of intuition used by decision-makers when faced with unexpected decision-making states caused by quick and profound environmental alterations: Instinctive reaction, general experience, and focused learning. The intuitive person considers the whole picture of the danger rather than just the decision-making parts.

Dependent Decision-Making Style

The dependent decision-making style is defined by means of the utilisation of external assistance so that the decision is made depending on the expectations or suggestions of others. Dependent decision-makers are known for allowing their family and friends to make decisions for them, and as a result, yhey would not proactively pursue a job in any way that was adequately described. This could be because they were not forthcoming about the job they would accept (Nield, 2018).

Avoidant Decision-Making Style

Individuals adopt an avoidant decision-making style to put together every single attempt to avoid making a decision. According to the study of Spicer & Sadler-Smith (2005), the decision-maker strives to avoid/postpone and completely evade the role of making decisions.

Spontaneous Decision-Making Style

As per the study of Spicer & Sadler-Smith (2005), style is regarded as a reaction of imminence and aspiration from end to end in the decision-making process as swiftly as probable. Thus, spontaneous decision-making is a practice of instantaneous choices from accessible alternatives.

According to Wood (2012), the utility of decision styles as indicators of better consensus decision making. The findings revealed that self-reported rational decision-making was related to the quality of peer decision-making. Moreover, self-reported avoidance and spontaneous decision-making styles were found to be negatively related to peer decision-making quality. Khan, Kamal, and Batool (2012) found a direct association was also shown between excessive internal control and rational, intuitive, and spontaneous styles, as well as

a negative relationship between duo intervention control and intuitive style. Gender stereotypes portray men and women as inherently distinct. According to some research literature, women are portrayed as "intuitive" and interpersonally oriented, whereas men are portrayed as "rational" and independent of others (e.g. Gray, 1992; Tannen, 1991). Little research has been conducted to determine if men depend more on logic and women rely more on intuition while making judgments. Furthermore, few research works have looked at whether women's greater willingness to seek social support than men leads to women being more reliant on others to make decisions (Delaney, 2014).

As decision-making is, on the whole intricate during the teenage years, which is an important time period of transition. The youngster has to submit her/himself to the evolutionary task to build the finest choices for her/his future independently, in particular at school and in a persistently surfacing the social order, without orientation. In general, our youth are dissatisfied and undecided about their school choices, especially when it comes to doing external assignments (they protract that the future depends on fate and irrepressible events) and lack confidence in their decision-making abilities and use inadequate decisional strategies (for instance: procrastination and avoidance of the decision) (Bala, Kaur, & Singh, 2017). Developing educational programs to prepare adolescent people to make decisions is critical. As a necessary precursor to equipping young individuals to make more rational decisions, special focus should be given to the emotional sphere. Particularly during the youth age, this project is crucial (Bosch, Miranda, Sangiorgio, Acuña, Michelini, Marengo & Godoy, 2016).

Decision-making, according to Bloomer and Hodkinson (1997), is a complicated nexus involving habits, individual identity, life history, and historical and psychological contexts. These factors have a significant impact on the lives of students in Pakistan. As a result, the current study attempted to investigate different decision-making styles among university students. The researcher emphasises the significance of effective decision-making skills in

this study, which enables students to transform their values, knowledge, and attitudes into actual capabilities. This research will also stress the importance of institute management/faculty providing quality education and instils useful skills in students.

Objects of the Study

The following are the study's objectives:

1. To find out students' decision-making styles at the university level
2. To find out the significant difference in students' perceptions about decision-making styles in terms of their demographic information (gender, locale, and age).

Research Questions of the Study

The following are the study's research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in students' perception of decision-making styles in terms of their locale?
2. Is there any significant difference in students' perception of decision-making styles in terms of their age?

Methodology

The current research was, by nature, a quantitative study wherein the researcher investigated students' perceptions regarding different individual decision-making styles at the university level. Government university students from the education department/institute were the population of the study. Seven universities which offer B.Ed. (Hons.) the program was selected randomly from the respective division of Punjab; therefore, students from last semester were selected as a study sample by using the purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using a survey method. The information was gathered from the respondents via a survey questionnaire. Scott and Bruce's (1995) "General decision-making style" (GDMS) was adapted for this study. The reliability of the instrument was 0.72. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results are described in the following tables.

Table 1. Gender-wise Description Scores for Students' Decision-Making Styles

Gender		RDM	IDM	DDM	ADM	SDM
Female	Mean	16.12	15.36	11.41	19.02	11.67
	N	312	312	312	312	312
	SD	1.81	1.92	1.69	2.83	1.52
Male	Mean	16.24	15.42	11.43	18.60	12.16
	N	113	113	113	113	113
	SD	1.61	1.84	1.78	2.87	1.47
Total	Mean	16.30	15.61	11.57	18.86	11.78
	N	425	425	425	425	425
	SD	1.71	1.88	1.70	2.89	1.50

Female and male students' perceptions of the mean score for the five decision-making styles are shown in the table. Female (M = 19.02) and male (M = 18.60) students had the highest mean scores for avoidant decision-making style, whereas female (M = 11.41) and male (M = 11.43) students had the lowest mean scores for dependent decision-making style. This finding indicated that both students (female and male) used avoidant decision-making more willingly than additional styles while making life decisions.

Table 2. Descriptive Scores of Students' Decision-Making Styles (Rural and Urban)

Locale		RDM	IDM	DDM	ADM	SDM
Rural	Mean	17.03	16.28	12.60	19.50	12.81
	N	145	145	145	145	145
	Std. Deviation	1.81	1.88	1.71	2.83	1.50
Urban	Mean	17.31	16.57	12.50	20.10	12.81
	N	280	280	280	280	280
	Std. Deviation	1.70	1.90	1.70	2.87	1.50
Total	Mean	17.03	16.65	12.36	19.29	12.78
	N	425	425	425	425	425
	Std. Deviation	1.79	1.95	1.76	2.92	1.57

The table depicted the rural and urban students' perceptions of decision-making styles. The high mean score reflects students' perceptions of the avoidant decision-making style in rural (M = 19.50) and urban (M = 20.10) settings, whereas the low mean score reflects students' perceptions of the dependent decision-making style in rural (M = 12.60) and urban (M = 12.50) settings. This finding suggested that students from both locations (rural and urban) preferred avoidant decision-making strategies over other styles whether making personal or academic decisions.

Table 3. Gender Wise Comparison of Students' Perceptions about Decision-Making Styles

Variables	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*Df*	*t- value*	*Sig.*
Rationale Decision–Making Style	Female	312	16.12	1.81	423	–1.038	.358
	Male	113	16.24	1.61			
Intuitive Decision–Making Styles	Female	312	15.36	1.92	423	1.103	.662
	Male	113	15.42	1.84			
Dependent Decision–Making Style	Female	312	11.41	1.69	423	.285	.665
	Male	113	11.43	1.78			

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t- value	Sig.
Avoidant Decision-Making Style	Female	312	19.02	2.83	423	1.557	.629
	Male	113	18.60	2.87			
Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	Female	312	11.67	1.52	423	–1.707	.933
	Male	113	12.16	1.47			

This table shows the difference in gender-wise (between female and male) students' perceptions of decision-making styles. There was no significant difference between gender-wise students' views of decision-making styles subscales at the p≤ .05 level of significance. It appears that students hold similar views about these styles of decision-making.

Table 4. Gender Wise Comparison of Students' Perceptions regarding Decision-Making Styles

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t- value	Sig.
Decision Making Styles	Female	312	79.38	6.12	423	.431	.630
	Male	113	79.13	6.03			

At the p≤ .05 level of significance, the table indicates that gender-wise, no significant difference was found (female and male) students' perceptions of decision-making style. As a result, the results demonstrate that both students had nearly identical perspectives about overall decision-making styles.

Table 5. Locale Wise Comparison of Decision-Making Styles regarding Students' Perceptions

Variables	Locale	N	M	SD	Df	t- value	Sig.
Rationale Decision-Making Style	Rural	145	17.03	1.89	423	–1.805	.217
	Urban	280	17.31	1.71			
Intuitive Decision-Making Styles	Rural	145	16.28	1.93	423	–1.635	.697
	Urban	280	16.57	1.96			
Dependent Decision-Making Style	Rural	145	12.60	1.76	423	.372	.628
	Urban	280	12.03	1.76			
Avoidant Decision-Making Style	Rural	145	19.50	2.89	423	–2.271	.024
	Urban	280	20.10	2.91			
Spontaneous Decision-Making Style	Rural	145	12.81	1.55	423	.079	.940
	Urban	280	12.78	1.59			

The table shows the different perceptions of students regarding their locale (rural and urban) about decision-making styles. The results revealed a significant difference in students' views of avoidant decision-making styles between rural and urban (t-value= –2.271, p=.024) at the p≤ .05 level of significance when contrast to the other styles (rationale, intuitive, dependent, and spontaneous styles). It is stated that rural and urban students are trying to avoid and procrastinate the decisions though it might be a common daily decision or some important one.

Table 6. Locale Wise Comparison of Students' Perceptions about Decision-Making Styles

Variable	Locale	N	M	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Decision Making Styles	Rural	145	78.54	6.12	423	–2.015	.044
	Urban	280	79.62	5.92			

This table illustrates the different perceptions of students regarding their locale about styles. The table indicated that a significant difference was found (t-value= –2.015, p=.044) between rural and urban students' perceptions of decision-making styles at a p≤ .05 level of significance.

Table 7. Age-wise Comparison of Students' Perceptions about Decision-Making Styles

Variables		SS	MS	Df	F	Sig.
Rationale	Decision-Making	48.669	16.223	3	5.160	.002
Style		1675.633	3.144	422		
		1724.302		425		
Intuitive Decision-Making Style		26.461	8.820	3	2.323	.074
		2023.699	3.797	422		
		2050.160		425		
Dependent	Decision-Making	27.542	9.181	3	2.977	.031
Style		1643.452	3.083	422		
		1670.994		425		
Avoidant Decision-Making Style		27.824	9.275	3	1.088	.354
		4542.891	8.523	422		
		4570.715		425		
Spontaneous	Decision-Making	5.472	1.824	3	.732	.533
Style		1327.660	2.491	422		
		1333.132		425		

Age-wise, students' perceptions of five decision-making styles were investigated by applying "one-way ANOVA". It shows a significant difference at p≤ .05 level that the rationale decision-making style (f= 5.160, p=.002) and dependent decision-making style (f= 2.977, p=.031) have of significant level as contrasted to the additional styles (intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous styles). That is apparent that students have varied opinions about the styles they carry.

Table 8. Comparison of Students' Perceptions Age wise as regards Decision-Making Styles

Variable	SS	MS	Df	F	Sig.
Decision-Making Styles	384.532	128.174	3	3.500	.015
	19496.568	36.547	422		
	19881.110		425		

Age-wise, students' perceptions about decision-making styles were investigated by applying one-way ANOVA. A significant difference in students' views of decision-making styles was revealed at the p≤ .05 level of significance.

Discussion

The current study's main goal was to investigate students' perspectives of decision-making styles at the university level in Punjab. The study's findings revealed that students have various perceptions of the styles they carry. The findings revealed that students use avoidant decision-making approaches to a great extent. At the same time, dependent decision-making styles were the least likely to be used for everyday life tasks or academic purposes. This result indicated that students tried to avoid such a situation where the decision was necessary, so they tried to postpone as much as possible. According to Pasquarella (2013), students frequently postpone decisions whether they are connected to academic or personal obligations. According to Khan, Kamal, and Batool (2012), the majority of respondents use dependent and avoidant decision-making styles. Another study performed

by [Ding, Xu, Yang, Li, and Heughten (2020)](#) illustrated that students with and without "business experience" have different decision-making approaches. This study supported the previous findings that students with little or no business experience tend to avoid making decisions. Meanwhile, several recent researchers, such as [Johnson (2020)](#) and [Nield (2018),](#) dispute the findings, claiming that rational decision-making is acknowledged to be logical and orderly and that it is widely used by students. The findings also demonstrated that both female and male decision-makers had the same perspective about their decision-making processes. The study contradicts the findings of [Taylor (2011)](#) that there are disparities in how men and women use social support. Females are used to being concerned and seeking support from others and in their social networks (e.g., children, friends, and relatives), particularly during stressful times. In a broad sense, men reported experiencing larger but less intimate social support networks. Women may be more likely than males to report employing a dependent decision-making style as they consult others while making decisions. This is consistent with [Jones' (2002)](#) study, which discovered that female managers were more likely than male managers to report utilising an overall concerned moral approach while making decisions, which included evaluating concern for others. It may well be stated that rural and urban areas students, according to their perception, urban students were carried out "avoidant style". A significant difference was found in the opinion of rural and urban students regarding styles, which means they carried different styles. Results further revealed that students, according to their age, seemed to be concerned regarding making-decision. A significant difference was founded on rational styles and dependent styles by the older age students. Because of their age, they think sensibly while making decisions and are more self-reliant. [Delaney (2014)](#) identified a significant difference based on age and gender. Being female and being older were both linked to having a more independent/self-controlled decision-making style. In Pakistan, students in such adolescent age still need guidance and support to make dictions; either they make delay or avoidant the situation as much as they can. Most of the students cannot make daily routine decisions individually; for academic choices, they still depend on others or feel uneasy about making a decision by themselves. In a nutshell, it is concluded that necessary help and education should be provided to adolescence to take the right decisions at the right time along with their right decisions should be well recognised.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, recommendations are as follows:

1. University faculties provide a multitude of opportunities for students to develop their decision-making skills.

2. University faculties may seek help from Professional advisors who can offer self-help workshops and seminars for the student, which empower them to deal with such problems while making decisions.

3. Conduct a parallel investigation at a private university/institution to explore students' decision-making styles from various disciplines.

References

Bala, I., Kaur, R., & Singh, S. (2017). Decision-making styles and academic achievement. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development, 2*(4), 97-100.

Bloomer, M. & Hodkinson, P. (1997). *Moving into FE: The voice of the learner*. Further Education Development Agency.

Bosch, C., Miranda, J., Sangiorgio, M., Acuna, I., Michelini, Y., Marengo, L., & Godoy, J. C. (2016). Effect of training with a real-time strategy game on decision making in adolescents. *Psiencia. Latin American Journal of Psychological Science, 8*(1), 1–19.

Cooper, J. A., Worthy, D. A., Gorlick, M. A., & Maddox, W. T. (2013). Scaffolding across the lifespan in history-dependent decision-making. *Psychology and Aging, 28*(2), 505–514. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032717

Crossley, C. D., & Highhouse, S. (2005). Relation of job search and choice process with subsequent satisfaction. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 26*(2), 255–268. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2004.04.001

Delaney, R. K. (2014). *Age and gender differences in decision-making style profiles* (master thesis). West Virginia University. Morgantown, West Virginia.

Ding, N., Xu, X., Yang, H., Li, Y., & Van Heughten, P. (2019). Decision-making styles of Chinese business students. *Journal of Education for Business, 95*(6), 351–358. https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2019.1654968

Driver, M. J., Brousseau, K. R., & Hunsaker, P. L. (1990). *The dynamic decision maker.* New York Harper & Row.

Harren, V. A. (1979). A model of career decision making for college students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 14*(5), 119-133.

Jones, N. J. (2002). Sex and racial differences in preference for a caring morality in a corporate environment that promotes diversity and equal opportunity. *Psychological Reports, 91*(2), 641-649.

Johnson, D. (2020). *The relationship between decision-making styles and frameworks for ethical reasoning, and the Moderating factor of moral intensity* (PhD Dissertation). Saint Leo University.

Khan, A. Y., Kamal, A., & Batool, N. (2012). The relationship between decision making styles and belief in personal control among army personnel. *Pakistan Journal of Psychology, 43*(2), 401-419.

Leykin, Y., & DeRubeis, R. J. (2010). Decision-making styles and depressive symptomatology: Development of the decision styles questionnaire. *Judgment and Decision making, 7*(5), 506-515.

Mann, L., Burnett, P., Radford, M., & Ford, S. (1997). The Melbourne decision making questionnaire: An instrument for measuring patterns for coping with decisional conflict. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making, 10*(1), 1–19.

Nield, L. (2018). *Examining the relationship between decision-making styles and job search behaviors: A test of the individual differences hypothesis* (BS/ Honors thesis). Appalachian State University.

Parker, A. M., & Fischhoff, B. (2005). Decision-making competence: External validation through an individual-differences approach. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making, 18*(1), 1-27.

Pasquarella, K. F. (2013). *Undecided students: a study of decision-making styles and choosing a college major at Rowan University.* Theses and Dissertations. 391. https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/391

Patton, J. R. (2003). Intuition in decisions. *Journal of Decision Making, 43*(10), 989-996.

Scott, S. G., & Bruce, R. A. (1995) Decision-making style: The development and assessment of a new measure. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 55*(5), 818–831.

Spicer, D. P., & Sadler-Smith, E. (2005). An examination of the general decision making style questionnaire in two UK samples. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 20*(2), 137-149.

Tannen, D. (1991). *You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation.* Ballantine Books.

Taylor, S. E. (2011). Social support: A review. *The handbook of health psychology*, 189-214. Oxford University Press.

Thunholm, P. (2004). Decision-making style: habit, style or both?. *Personality and individual differences, 36*(4), 931-944.

Verma, N., & Rangnekar, S. (2015). General decision making style: Evidence from India. *South Asian Journal of Global Business Research, 4*(1),

Wood, N. L. (2012). *Individual differences in decision-making styles as predictors of good decision making* (Unpublished Master thesis). Bowling Green State University.