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Personality Traits and Decision Making Styles among University Students (Pakistan)

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ABSTRACT

Keeping the literature available on human personality traits and their impact on human behaviors (for example decision making), this study was designed. The primary aim of the study was to explore personality traits and decision making styles among young adults. Furthermore it was also aimed to investigate if there is any relationship between above said phenomena and if there is any gender differences exists. Moreover this study was designed to examine the personality traits as a predictor of decision making styles among young adults. The sample of study comprised of 402 university students including both male (n=178, 44%) and female (n=224, 56%). After taking informed consent the data was collected through convenient sampling. Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John & Srivastava, 1999 and Decision Making Style Inventory by Scott & Bruce, 1995 were used as an instruments to measure personality and decision making styles respectively. The results revealed that conscientiousness leads to rational decision making style (P=0.014). Females showed higher decision making capability than males (P=0.003). Hostel resident students were more conscientious than non-hostel residents (P=0.034). Urban students were more rational in decision making than rural students (P=0.047). Students from nuclear family type showed both decision making styles i.e. rational and intuitive than of joint family system (P=0.05). It was concluded that conscientious people make rational decisions and females tend to have good decision making capability as compared to males.

INTRODUCTION

Personality traits have strong impact on decision making styles and gender also influences decision making styles. The aim of this study is to check this impact among students that how personality and gender affect student's decision making styles. Personality could be defined as the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individuals that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intra-psychic, physical, and social environments. (Larsen, 2012). These characteristics in turn affect the thought pattern, feelings, and actions of an individual thus differentiating him from any other individual. The origin of the word "personality" is root in Latin term "persona", interpreted as mask . Personality could also be defined as the distinct thought patterns, sentiments,

social adaptations, and actions regularly showed over time that strongly affects one's presumptions, self-concept, values, and behaviors (Boyle et al., 2008). It also predicts individual's reactions to other people, problems, and stress. (Winnie and Gittinger, 1973; Krauskopf and Saunders, 1994). Big Five personality traits are five broad domains or dimensions of personality that are used to describe human personality. The idea of big five personality traits is rooted upon Five Factor Model (FFM) (Costa and McCrae, 1992). The first one among the Big Five factors is "openness to experience" which is concerned with intellect, curiosity and creativity. The second factor in the list is "conscientiousness", it deals with the features of organization, dependability and goal orientation. "Extraversion" being the third factor is associated with social gatherings, thrill and friendliness. The fourth factor of this model is "agreeableness"

which is concerned kindness, trust and tolerance. The final item on this list is ″neuroticism″ it is associated with moodiness, emotionality and anxiousness. OCEAN is a common acronym used to refer these five personality traits all together (Matthews et al., 2003).

By definition decision making is the procedure of selecting a legitimate decision amongst the accessible alternatives (Uzonwanne, 2015). At the point when attempting to settle on a decent choice, an individual must weigh the positives and negatives of every alternative, and consider all the choices. For viable choice making, the person must have the capacity to predict the result of every alternative, and in light of all these things, figure out which choice is the best for that specific circumstance (Reason, 1990).

Human performance with regard to decisions is subjected to active research from several perspectives i.e. psychological, cognitive and normative (Global business, 2011). Psychological view evaluates individual decisions with reference to the set of requirements, preferences and principles the individual seeks. According to Cognitive view the decision-making procedure is regarded as a consistent process integrated in the interaction with the environment. Normative perspective is by the analysis of individual decisions concerned with the logic of decision-making and rationality and the invariant choice it leads to (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979).

Rational decision making is mind-directed, dynamic regulation that is deliberate and intentional. It has a single purpose and is directed by one′s voluntary intentions (Iran- Nejad and Gregg, 2001). Intuitional decision making is brain-directed, dynamic regulation, which deals with daily activities (Epstein, 1990; Iran-Nejad and Gregg, 2001). In case of any problem, this mode is the first to respond (Bowden and Jung-Beeman, 2003; Epstein, 1990). It is associated with acting something that has previously being performed (Dominowski and Dallob, 1995). Reproduced behavior, stereotypical responses, habits, and adapting known solution routines to a current situation fall into this category of decision making styles.

Keeping in view the existing literature this study was designed. The main objective of the study was to explore personality traits and decision making styles among university students and if there is any gender difference on these two phenomena. Furthermore it was aimed to investigate the impact of personality traits on decision making styles of young adults.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Target population
Sample consisted of 402 university students (N=402), both male and female (178 males and 224 females). The age range of participants was between 19-26 years. The demographic variables were age, education, residential area, birth order, gender and hostel/non hostel residents taken into consideration. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data from sample.

Survey questionnaires
Big five personality inventory (John and Srivastava, 1999) consisted of 44-item that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality was used to measure personality on a likert scale. Each of the factors is then further divided into personality facets. BFI scale scoring (″R″ denotes reverse-scored items):
Extraversion: 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, 36.
Agreeableness: 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, 42.
Conscientiousness: 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38, 43R.
Neuroticism: 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, 39.
Openness: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, 44
Decision making style inventory developed by Scott and Bruce (1995) was used in this study. It consists of 8 items and response format is likert. Item no 1,2,6,8 measure rational style while 3,4,5,7 measure intuitive style of decision making.

Data Collection
The data was collected from students of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan with student′s consent and confidentiality was assured. A booklet containing 2 scales of Big Five Inventory and Decision Making Style Inventory was given to students. Researcher explained the instructions to participants. Required demographic information was also mentioned in the booklet. They were free to give responses. All information was collected in appropriate timings. The whole data was collected within 2 month. After the data was collected, scoring of each scale was done and data was entered in SPSS to statistically analyze the data. Results were found by computing t-test. The nature of study was descriptive.

RESULTS

The results of regression analysis related to conscientiousness on rational decision making style are shown in Table 1. The P-value for conscientiousness was 0.014 and value of coefficient was 0.178 which indicated that conscientiousness was an influencing personality factor for decision making style. These results can predict impact on decision making style. Results of gender differences on different decision making styles are shown in Table 2. The given data manifested that females (M=2.67) used more rationale decision making style than males (M=2.436) counterpart. Interestingly similar differences were seen on intuitive decision making style, females (M=2.46) showed more intuitive decision making capability than males (M=2.70). The P-value showed significant difference between both genders on rationale and intuitive decision making style (Table 2).

Table 1: Regression analysis: Conscientiousness on Rational Decision Making Style

	B	N	T	P
Constant	1.497	100	2.462	0.014
conscientiousness	.178	100	1.978	0.014

Note: (N=402), P>0.05.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, on the scale of Decision making style inventory among Male and Female Adults (N=402).

Traits	Gender	N	M	SD	T	P
Rationale	Males	178	2.4368	0.94995		
	Females	224	2.6789	0.81147	-2.75	0.003**
Intuitive	Males	178	2.4621	0.97586		
	Females	224	2.7067	1.18731	-2.22	0.014*

P<0.05

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, on the scale of Big Five among non-hostel and hostel students

Traits	Hs/non-Hs	N	M	SD	T	P
Contentiousness	Hostel	205	3.4033	0.61155		
					2.123	0.034*
	Non hostel	197	3.2729	0.62395		

*P<0.05

Statistical examination provided in table 3 showed that hostel resident students were more conscientiousness (M=3.40) than non-hostel resident students (M=3.27). The difference was found statistically significant (*P=0.034, T= 2.123). Comparative investigation illustrated (Table 4) that urban students (M=3.15) were more rational in decision making than rural (M=2.94) students. Although the difference was very minor with P=0.047 and difference was significant.

Further, it was also found that students from nuclear family type were higher in both rational and intuitive decision making styles than students from joint family system (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to explore the link between personality traits and decision making styles. Results give an idea that personality traits lead to different decision making styles.

The 1st hypothesis of the research that "conscientiousness leads to rational decision making style" was accepted. Analysis explained that beta value was 0.178 with P=0.04 which showed there was strong impact of conscientiousness on rational decision making style. This result correlated with research of Pacini and Epstein (1999), who found a significant positive correlation between rationality and Conscientiousness. The 2nd hypothesis of the study was "females had higher decision making capability than males". Analysis showed that mean values of both decision making styles among females were higher as compared to males and results were also significant. A previous study supports this hypothesis that Women have better decision making abilities than Men, make better corporate leaders (Adams and Ferreira, 2009). Next hypothesis explained relationship of conscientiousness and a demographic variable hostel or non-hostel residence. Results revealed that hostel residents were more conscientiousness than non-hostel resident students. The mean value for hostel residents was 3.4033 with P=0.034. Results of this hypothesis were also significant. Hostel residents had more exposure of life and different situations. This hypothesis was not supported by literature review because no such research could found on these variables.

The 4th hypothesis explained the relationship between decision making styles and residence of students as from nuclear or joint family systems. The analysis provided an idea that students from nuclear family types had greater mean values for both type of decision making styles than students from joint family systems. It was because in nuclear family type there was individualistic environment, each and every person was free and could take his decision on his own. Decision making practices were greater in nuclear families than in joint family systems because in joint families people were highly interconnected and dependent to each other. This hypothesis can be supported by findings of Epstein (1990) who showed that reproduced behavior, stereotypical responses, habits, and adapting known solution routines to a current situation fall into this category of decision making. For intuitional decisions, the decision-maker recalled and applied previously acquired knowledge or associations, yet these previous solutions failed when a novel solution was needed. This mode makes rapid decisions, but changing the way in which decisions are made is very slow (Epstein, 1990).

Last hypothesis explained relationship between decision making styles and rural or urban residence. Results showed that urban students were more rational in decision making than rural students. Mean values of urban students were greater than rural students and

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, on the scale of Decision making style inventory among urban and rural students

Traits	Residence	N	M	SD	T	P	Cohen's d
Rational style	Urban	250	3.1537	1.03471			
					1.992	0.047	0.05
	Rural	152	2.9408	1.04523			

P<0.05

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, on the scale of Decision making style among students from nuclear and joint family system (N=402).

Traits	Family Type	N	M	SD	T	P
Rationale	Nuclear	231	3.1638	0.97761		
	Joint	171	2.9620	1.11078	1.928	0.04
Intuitive	Nuclear	231	3.1620	1.29203		
	Joint	171	2.8918	1.00163	2.213	0.027

difference was significant (P=0.05). It can be supported by the concept that Bounded Rationality is a reduced yet practical form of deliberative reasoning (Simon, 1979), that addresses the cognitive limitations of individuals, the finite amount of time available to make decisions, and the quality of the information available.

Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, conscientiousness leads to rational decision making style among students. Considering the demographic variables females have higher capability of decision making than males whereashostel resident students are much more rational in decisionmaking thannon-hostel resident students. Families also play an important role as students from nuclear family type have more decision making capability than of joint family system. Students of urban area are more rational in decision making than of rural areas.

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Authors' contribution

All authors contributed equally in preparing this manuscript.

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