Gender Differences in General Decision- Making Style

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ABSTRACT

It reviews the general decision-making style by males and females, examining how they process information to weigh options and make appropriate personal and professional decisions. Research was conducted using a more quantitative approach by utilizing a scale developed by Scott and Bruce in 1995 named the General Decision-Making Style (GDMS). The five primaries decision-making styles are rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. The sample consisted of 124 adult participants, with 62 males and 62 females, selected through stratified random sampling. The findings here show that the mean scores for males and females differ only slightly, while nearly equal scores are seen for their median scores. Analysis of the data using independent samples t-test and Mann-Whitney U test reveals that there is no significance of difference between genders as the p-values are greater than 0.05. Thus, gender does not have a significant role to play in determining the decision-making behavior. Though females do show slightly higher variability of scores on decision-making, the result is not statistically significant. It thus suggests that both genders have almost the same decision-making styles and this negates the assumption of significant gender-based differences in decision-making styles. The results of this study adds to the knowledge base on gendered behavior in decision-making, providing important insights for leadership, organizational behavior, and social dynamics. Future research should look at larger, more diverse samples and examine decision-making in specific contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Since it is a part of human behavior, decision-making influences everything in human life-from love and friendship to careers and professions. It could be choosing what to eat for breakfast or deciding on a career; everything that is done in the realm of decision-making is achieved by using a variety of cognitive, emotional, and social factors. One of the most compelling factors is gender, which may "operate in order to make men and women approach decision-making tasks in differential ways." Such differences have garnered a substantial amount of academic attention because grasping them can elucidate much about behavior, variations in

leader styles, interpersonal situations, and organizational effects. The objective of this research is to explore gender differences in general decision-making style and how men and women process information, weigh options, and arrive at conclusions both in personal and professional contexts. The importance of gender differences in decision-making is that it provides insights into the method people use in problem-solving and decision-making under varying

conditions.

Decision-making affects all aspects of life, from managing personal finances to mingling with Others at work and other places of social engagement. It also appears to be a central element in leadership and organizational performance since styles of decision-making often affect the ways that leadership is approached and the way groups operate within their environments. For example, styles of decision-making will have a more direct and fundamental impact on leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and organizational output. In social settings, gendered decision-making will impact interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and communication dynamics. Moreover, because norms of gender roles are always under change and evolution, this understanding of how such norms continue to have an effect on decision making in diverse contexts are needed.

Traditionally, the cultures have molded the social man to appreciate independence, assertiveness, and strict reasoning. Females, however, have been inclined to emphasize cooperation, sympathy, and emotional inclinations. Such influences might dictate the way males and females make decisions in certain situations. Males are likely to tend towards an individualistic goal-oriented approach, while females may seek other people's opinions on the matter and consider the emotional or relational implications of their choice. Such differences are

often framed in terms of stereotypes, but such stereotypes can indeed have serious consequences in both everyday behavior and group dynamics. The present investigation aims to contribute to this very long debate on the way men and women may differ in their decision-making processes.

Decisions are made from different contexts and involve cognitive, emotional, and social influences on the decision-making process. This research is based upon these general understandings to realize the underlying reasons for this difference between genders and check if the influence of gender role is somehow diminishing or still strongly working in decision-making behaviors. The implications of this study may lead to important conclusions regarding leadership, organizational behavior, and social interaction, as knowing the gendered decision-making styles may assist individuals and organizations in better understanding how to navigate such decisions on an inclusive basis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bakewell and Mitchell in 2006 researched Male versus Female consumer decision making styles with a sample of 480 young males and females. The research identifies the nine decision making traits are common to both genders. The findings suggest that loyalty creation programs, price related appeals and also methods for improving their shopping efficiencies when targeting young adults.

Mitchell and Walsh in 2004 studied gender differences in German consumer decision making styles and understanding how gender is affecting the approaches to decision making. They used the Sproles and Kendall's 1986 consumer styles inventory with the sample size of 358 German males and females. The study confirms the all seven characteristics are found in previous study but there are only four characteristics are found in male. It indicates that the CSI may not be equally valid for both genders. The support was found for new

factors for male are namely satisfying, enjoyment-variety seeking, fashion-scale seeking, time restricted and economy seeking. Therefore, the results conclude that the construct of CSI has validity for female and it shows that the validity is less in male.

In 1978, Patrica W Lunneborg researched the sex and career decision-making styles. It made use of 116 undergraduates and 717 high school students. The hypothesis is that females rely more on the intuitive style while making a career decision-making whereas males rely more on the planning style. The findings indicate that there were no sex differences among high school and college students on the style of decision-making, vocational self-concept crystallization or self-rated vocational decisiveness. Planning styles had the highest associations with vocational decisiveness. There appears not to be any indication for differential career counseling of the sexes.

Unal and Erics in 2008 explored the role of gender differences in determining the style of consumer decision-making. They have used the consumer style inventory (CSI) by Sproles and Kendall, 1986. The consumer decision making styles have been analyzed with the CSI approach. It deals with the mental orientation of consumers in making decision and also focuses on the cognitive and effective orientations in decision making of consumers. The population is in this study, a set of male and female respondents living in Erzurum, Turkey. There, the results indicate a gap in the decision style by male and female's consumers.

Glover, Bumps et. al. in 2002 conducted research on gender differences in ethical decision making. The study revisits the individual variable of gender and its influence on ethical decision making. Using the laboratory format and decision exercise that tried to create realistic business conflict situations through decision scenarios, the influence of demographic factors, gender, and moral intensity of the conflict situation on ethical decision making is analyzed in the light of values in workplace.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

To study the difference in the decision-making styles of male and female.

Hypotheses

Null hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference in decision-making styles between the two genders.

Alternative hypothesis

There is a significant statistical difference between the styles of decision making between the two genders.

Research design

The current study utilized the quantitative approach to test whether there was a general gender difference in decision styles that were measured by GDMS Scale by Scott and Bruce (1995). The aim is thus to see how male and female subjects are different in their decision-making process along five specific styles: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. This would be a statistically significant insight into gender-based decision-making tendencies as responses to the GDMS would be analyzed with a well-established and validated instrument.

The scale of the GDMS is an excellent tool for setting up and understanding individual decision-making styles, which is equivalent to measuring tendencies related to cognitive, emotional, and social choice strategies. The hypothesis of the study is that significant gender differences will be found in one or more decision-making styles, particularly in how males and female's process decisions, seek advice, and make spontaneous versus deliberate choices.The study is based on the theoretical framework of Scott and Bruce's General Decision-Making Style Model from 1995, which identifies five primary types of decision-making styles, as indicated in the table below:

Rational - A logical, systematic approach for arriving at decisions; individuals collect much information and base a decision on the evaluation of alternatives.

Intuitive - Individuals who prefer to take decisions based on intuition, that is, without going into deep analysis.

Dependent - In this situation, people seek advice and rely heavily on people's opinions in deciding.

Avoidant - This is characterized by a tendency to avoid decisions due to fear of making mistakes or for the discomfort of making decisions.

Spontaneous - Such persons take on very impulsive decisions in which less or no planning and consideration is taken.

The most prevalent tool for measuring decision styles is the General Decision Making.

Style (GDMS) Scale developed by Scott and Bruce in 1995. GDMS was a self-report

This is a questionnaire which tested the levels at which people's decision-making was under the five most crucial parameters. It was a 25-item scale, where each was representing one of the five decision-making styles which are rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. The measurement scale of every item used is a 5-point Likert scale. Where 1 represents strongly

Disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree and in case of 5 represents as strongly agree.

Sample

The population of this study is 124 adult participants, with equal number of males and females (62 males and 62 females), to ensure balanced comparison between the gender group. A sample of university students, young professionals, and working adults were recruited. Participants will be selected using stratified random sampling so that all categories of different demographic groups like age, education level, and occupation are proportionately represented. Participants should be male or female. The participant must be older than 18 years.

Internet access is necessary for participants to respond to the online survey. The Participants selected were proficient in English to ensure accurate comprehension of the survey questions and the GDMS scale.

Instrument

The most common tool for measuring decision-making styles is the General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) Scale compiled by Scott and Bruce in 1995. GDMS was a self-report questionnaire that tested the levels at which the people's decision making was within the five most crucial parameters

Procedure for data analysis

This questionnaire has 25 items which each represent one among the five decision-making styles, such as rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous styles. Each item is measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Where a score of 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neutral, 4 means agree and 5 means strongly agree. All the responses of each participant were scored and interpreted. The style which had the highest score among the five areas was considered to be the preferred decision-making style of the individual. In this way the decision-making styles were compared between the two genders. The total group average scores, standard deviation score, and the statistical difference between the groups was calculated using independent sample t-test with the help of JAMOVI 2.6.13 software.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was done through an online survey where participants were asked to fill out the GDMS along with a few demographic questions using Google Forms. The survey link was broadcast both through email and on social media to prospective respondents, which includes university students, professionals, and working persons within the desired age range. To heighten the reliability of the responses, participants are first educated on the value of thoughtful and personal response to each question asked.

Ethical considerations

Before the questionnaire was administered to each participant, they received an informed consent form. This demonstrated the purpose of the research, measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and that participation was purely voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any stage without facing any repercussions.

RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to compare the style of decision-making among two genders. The responses were received from a total of 124 participants equally representing two genders, with 62 belonging to female and 62 belonging to male. The average mean scores of participants belonging to generation z is 153 and average score of millennials is 149. The standard deviation score of participants belonging to female is 16.3 and that of male is 14.9. The median score of participants belonging to female is 152 and that of male is 149. The variance score of participants belonging to female is 267 and that of male is 221.

Table 1: Descriptives

	Gender	total scores
N	**1***	62
	2**	62
Mean	**1**	152
	2	150
Median	**1**	152
	2	149
Standard deviation	**1**	16.3
	2	14.9
Variance	**1**	267
	2	221

*Indicates Female, ** Indicates Male

The t-value of 0.938 indicates that the differences between the two genders are very small since the t-value is relatively low.

A t-value of 0.938 means that the two means are relatively close in value.

The p-value of 0.350 is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, meaning the difference in the mean scores for female and male is not statistically significant. In other words, we cannot reject the null hypothesis (H_a: $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$) and, hence, decide that there is no significant gender difference in decision-making based on data.

The p-value equal to 0.326, also greater than the most often used significance level of 0.05, thereby supporting the conclusion of the t-test that there is no significant difference between scores of decision-making of female and Male.

Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p
total scores	**Student's t**	0.938	122	0.350
	Mann-Whitney U	1725		0.326

Note. H_a $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

DISCUSSIONS

The p-values for the results of tests for statistical analysis in both Independent Samples T-Test and the Mann-Whitney U test are above 0.05. Therefore, this implies that there is no significant difference as regards the scores for decision-making between females and males.There is a small difference in Mean and Median. Although the mean score for female is slightly larger (152) compared to male (150), the difference is negligible. The median scores are also, generally, along the same lines with Gender 1 having a slightly higher median score (152 compared to 149). There is nothing in either mean or median to suggest that the genders have different styles when it comes to deciding.

Variability in Scores It states that female shows more variability in decision making as evidenced by higher standard deviation and variance, 16.3 and 267 respectively, compared to male with 14.9 and 221. This would mean that scores for Gender 1 are more spread out and have a few extrema scores. For Gender 2, scores present a more consistent pattern towards decision making. Both the independent samples t-test and the Mann-Whitney U test failed to bring out any statistically significant difference in the decision-making behavior between the two genders. We can therefore conclude that the mean and median differences observed do not suffice in suggesting any meaningful or significant distinction in the style of decision-making between the genders with p-values equal.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that, from the data above, the decision variable does not significantly differ between female and male. Minor disparities in mean and median values, as well as higher variability in the case of female in decision-making, are not sufficient to draw important conclusions on statistical grounds. The styles for both

genders are quite similar in overall decision-making styles, and the observed differences are relatively low. In conclusion, the research states that the differences may not be much between them.

. LIMITATIONS

Although the sample size is 62 individuals per group for both female and male, the sample cannot be said to represent the mainstream populations of the two genders. A sample size of 62 individuals may be small to successfully pick or analyze minute changes in decision-making, especially in complex behavioral research studies. In addition, if the sample from which the data was collected does not vary in age, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and location, then the results are not generalizable to all members of those genders.

A general measure of decision-making skills without regard to specific contexts of decision making (e.g., decisions of a financial nature, vocational or career decisions, health decisions). Decision-making is, in fact, context-dependent, and different factors might influence the way men and women make decisions in particular domains. Males and females might approach financial decisions differently from the way they approach interpersonal decisions or vocational choices.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research should consist of much larger and more diverse samples, representative with a wider cross section of participants considering demographic factors, to make the findings more applicable and generalizable to the larger population. Longitudinal studies would help examine how decision-making patterns change over time, giving more robust evidence of whether gender differences in decision-making are stable or become more fluid with age or experience. Tracking individuals at multiple points may also elucidate how life events affect gendered decision-making.

That would add depth to trying to understand how cultural norms influence decision-making behaviors across genders by investigating how gender socialization and societal expectations shape the decision-making process. Explorations into some underlying psychological and social factors may find even more hidden layers of complexity involved in understanding gender differences in decision-making.

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