

Impact of decision making styles on mental health of working adults

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Objective: To investigate the impact of decision making styles on mental health of working adults.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study with cluster sampling was conducted at National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad from September 24, 2017 to February 10, 2018. A sample of 300 adults working in different organizations (Male=150; Female=150) were selected with an age range of 20-60 years. English version of General Decision-Making Style Scale and Mental Health Inventory were used to assess decision making styles and mental health, respectively.

Results: Rational decision making style ($\beta=.26$, $p<.01$) was a strong positive predictor of mental

health. However, avoidant decision making style ($\beta=-.23$, $p<.01$) was a negative predictor. Rational decision making style was positively related with anxiety, behavioral control, depression, positive affect and mental health. Avoidant decision making style was negatively related with the former mental health indicators.

Conclusion: Decision making styles have an effect on mental health of working adults particularly, rational and avoidant decision making styles. (Rawal Med J 202;45:334-337).

Keywords: Decision making styles, anxiety, depression, behavioral control, positive affect, working adults.

INTRODUCTION

According to Kohn selecting a route of action among least effectual route of action and to determine a beneficial thing to do is concern of the dynamic process of decision making.¹ Barnard postulated that organizational decisions usually if not consistently can be delegated to others but personal decisions cannot generally be delegated.² Simon stated that programmed decisions involve decisions which are taken on regular basis and are of repetitive kind while non-programmed then are fundamental in addition novel in essence and are not of repetitive kind alike programmed choices.³

Decision making styles are defined by Scott and Bruce as attained typical reaction array displayed by a person once challenged in which decision making is required.⁴ Following decision making styles were defined in interactive expression as: A rational style is categorized by extensive exploration for information, catalogue of alternatives and logical assessment of alternatives. Intuitive style is categorized by means of attending to particulars in flux of data instead of organized exploration for, and information handling, and a proneness to depend on instinct and emotional state. A dependent style

categorized by exploration for assistance and instructions beforehand taking major decisions from others. An avoidant style categorized by efforts of refraining from decision making whenever possible. In the assessment practice, another decision-making style emanate: a Spontaneous Style categorized by a sensation of rapid urge to go through the process of decision-making as soon as feasible.

Current standpoint perceives decision styles as a subgroup of cognitive styles.^{5,6} However, some researchers perceive decision making styles as learned habits of making decisions in a particular manner.^{4,7} Others perceive them as personality and value build.⁸ Decision making styles have trait-based as well as contextual precursor.

Mental Health is defined as a condition of comprehensive physical and social health whereas not simply the absenteeism of disease.^{9,10} Mental Health Model by Veit and Ware explains the phenomenon of psychological well-being and psychological distress under the broader concept of mental health.¹¹ Psychological distress is categorized by a variety of indications comprising of lack of enthusiasm, disturbed sleep, feeling dispirited or gloomy, disheartened regarding the

future, and feeling emotional.^{12,13}

Decision making styles are important factors for mental health.^{14,15} According to Baval'ar and Orosová¹⁶ among decision styles spontaneous, rational, and dependent did not happen to be noteworthy interpreters of mental health criteria. The avoidant style was negatively associated by mental health in the current study, but likewise in exploration of stress via saliva cortisol discharge.¹⁷ Thunholm¹⁸ suggests that people inclined towards escaping from making any central decisions if probable also the one depending on guidance by others while formulating significant decisions. Noteworthy positive relationship was found between depression and avoidant style while negative association with intuitive style.¹⁹ The study aims to explore if rational, intuitive and spontaneous decision making style would be a positive predictor of mental health.

METHODOLOGY

This cross sectional study was conducted using a clustered sample of 300 working adults, 150 male and 150 female with age range from 20 to 60 years from various organizations and institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Clusters were formed from following selected organizations of Zones, Holy Family Hospital, Combined Military Hospital, Nayatel, Lahore Grammar School, Care School System, Allied School, Habib Bank limited, Allied Bank, National Information technology Board. Total selected organizations were 10 and from each organization 30 participants, 15 male and 15 female were considered belonging to various professions such as doctors, teachers, bankers, engineers and others.

General Decision-Making Style Questionnaire (GDMQ) was used to measure various decision-making styles. This likert-type scale with 5 point response options ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) was developed by Scott and Bruce⁴ and contains 25 items with 5 subscales, rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant and spontaneous. It has no total score and reliability of subscales of GDMQ ranges from .68 to .94.

Mental Health Inventory is an 18 item instrument and a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from all of time (1) and none of the time (6), developed by Veit and Ware¹¹ which has higher order factor of Psychological

distress explaining negative mental health and lower order factors of Psychological wellbeing representing positive mental health. It has four subscales; anxiety, behavioral control, depression, and positive affect. A total score is also calculated of this scale and the reliability of MHI-18 is .82.

The permission was acquired from various organizations and institutions. An informed consent was taken from all participants. Instructions regarding carefully filling the questionnaire were given and honest responses were requested.

Statistical Analysis: The data were entered into SPSS version 22. To determine the reliability of scales Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was used. Multiple linear regression was used to determine the impact of decision making styles on mental health.

RESULTS

Out of 300 participants, 150(50%) were male and 150(50%) female. Working adults who participated belonged to various professions: 20% doctors, 17.7% engineers, 18.7% teachers and 23% bankers. Table 1 depicts mental health inventory ($\alpha=0.75$) is a reliable measure of associated constructs as alpha coefficient ranged in the suitable threshold of 0.70. The values of skewness of data reveal that half values are negative which means high scores are present in the distribution on the other hand half of kurtosis values are negative and others (20%).

Table 1. Alpha reliability Coefficient and Descriptive Statistics of GDMS and MHI, and all subscales (N= 300).

Measures	Items	α	M	SD	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Actual	Potential		
RDMS	5	.41	18.94	4.55	5-25	5-25	-.55	.08
IDMS	5	.22	17.1	4.51	5-25	5-25	-.27	-.78
DDMS	5	.5	17.14	5.09	5-25	5-25	-.26	-.58
ADMS	5	.41	16.21	4.81	5-25	5-25	-.54	.13
SDMS	5	.5	15.7	5.17	5-25	45-25	.18	-.57
MHI	18	.75	55.26	11.8	0-100	30-90	.62	.20
AN	5	.5	53.54	15.8	0-100	20-96	.10	-.28
BC	4	.27	59.88	15.8	0-100	15-100	.10	-.35
DEP	4	.56	51.23	17.8	0-100	0-100	.14	.33
PA	4	.54	63.87	15.79	0-100	20-100	.06	-.45

Note. RDMS= Rational decision making style, IDMS= Intuitive decision making style, DDMS= Dependent decision making, ADMS= Avoidant Decision making style and SDMS= Spontaneous Decision Making style, MHI= Mental Health Inventory, AN= Anxiety, BC= Behavioral Control, DEP= Depression PA= Positive Affect, M=Mean and SD=Standard deviation.

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression analysis showing the effect of Rational, Intuitive, Dependent, Avoidant and Spontaneous Decision Making Style on the prediction of Mental Health (N=300).

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	42.68	5.03		8.47	.00
RDMS	.69	.14	.26	4.67	.00**
IDMS	.18	.15	.06	1.19	.23
DDMS	-.10	.13	-.04	-.79	.42
ADMS	-.59	.13	-.23	-4.47	.00**
SDMS	.05	.13	.02	.42	.66
R²=	=.20				
ΔR²	=.18				

F(10.53, *df*=7) Note. RDMS= Rational decision making style, IDMS= Intuitive decision making style, DDMS= Dependent decision making, ADMS= Avoidant Decision making style and SDMS= Spontaneous Decision Making style, SE= Standard Error. **p*<.05, ***p*<.01.

Multiple Linear Regression analysis revealed that Rational decision making style ($\beta=.26$, $p<.01$) was a strong predictor and had considerable positive effect on mental health and intuitive decision making style has a non-significant positive effect on mental health. Although, dependent decision making style has a non-significant negative effect on mental health (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Among decision making styles, rational decision making style was a strong positive predictor of mental health whereas, avoidant decision making style was a negative predictor. We found that there is an impact of emotion regulation and decision making styles on mental health and furthermore, a relationship tends to subsist between emotion regulation and decision making style.

As rational decision making style is based on careful evaluation of situation and carefully gathering all the required information about the decision, so mental health has positive relationship with rational decision making. Regulating emotions, cognitive strategy has significant positive effect on mental health. Rational style has originated to be connected with additional positive effects than other styles.²⁰ Intuitive and spontaneous decision making style had a non-significant positive effect on mental health. It might be because intuitive style is a quick,

automatic hunch and a gut feeling which is innate thereby it has a positive effect on mental health. Baval'ár and Orosóvá¹⁶ found that on General Decision-making Style (GDMS), the intuitive decision-making style was positively related with mental health. Spontaneous decision making style has a non-significant positive effect on anxiety, behavioral control and depression also a significant positive effect on positive affect.

A study by Thunholm¹⁸ suggests that the spontaneous decision-makers are less stressed. It might be because spontaneous decision makers tend to make decisions quickly and hastily without a second thought as they don't indulge in long arduous process of scrutinizing, analyzing and then planning a decision thereby this decision making style has healthy and positive affect on mental health.

The avoidant decision making style was negatively associated with mental health.^{16,17} Dependent decision making style had a non-significant negative effect on mental health. Avoidant decision making style had a significant negative effect on anxiety, behavioral control and depression also a non-significant negative effect on positive affect. The reason might be as the avoidant decision makers tend to avoid decision making until the last minute so they are mostly trying to escape it therefore it has a positive effect on mental health.

Dependent decision making style had a significant positive effect on anxiety and a non-significant negative effect on behavioral control and depression. Also, it had a non-significant positive effect on positive affect. The reason might be their dependency on others to take crucial decisions of their life which leaves a negative impact on their mental health and increases their psychological distress. Allwood and Salo²⁰ examined the association amid decision-making styles and two measures of stress, perceived stress and sleep quality, amongst officers from three Swedish public offices. They found that avoidant and dependent styles associate positively with the indicators of stress. Thereby, avoidant and dependent decision making styles have negative effect on mental health.

CONCLUSION

We found that the decision making styles had an

impact on mental health of working adults particularly, rational and avoidant decision making styles. However, intuitive, spontaneous and dependent were not noteworthy interpreters of mental health. Organizations can get more productivity from their employees if sufficient knowledge and insight is provided to them about effective decision making styles which will in turn have an impact on their mental health.

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