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Decision Making Skills Among Class 10th Students

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Abstract
Decision making is an important life skill for Secondary School students and it is an important life skill at all stages in life. Usually secondary school students set some goals at this stage and therefore the present paper finds relevance in the study of decision making skills among class 10 students. Objectives of the study are framed based on the selected variables and hypotheses are formulated. Decision making skill among secondary school students is shown to have no significant influence on Gender. Among boys, 'age groups' 14 years and 15 years show significant difference on Decision making skills. The variable 'locality' shows significant difference between the boys of Rural and Urban Schools in Decision making skills. But there is no significant difference between the girls of Rural and Urban Schools (area) in Decision making skills.

Key Words
Decision making, gender, Age group Locality and Significant difference.

I. Introduction

Decision is a choice made between available alternatives. The Decision Making is a process of developing and analyzing alternatives and choosing from among them. Decision making is an important life skill at all stages in life. More importantly, learning is a part of the decision-making process. Appropriate decision making involves logical steps: determining the problem, considering multiple alternatives, and choosing the best alternative based on the particular situation. An appropriate skill in decision making requires abstract thinking to draw out all multiple alternatives. Some choices are easier to make than others. Situations arise where one has to make a decision from a set of given choices. Decision-making can also be regarded as a strategic problem-solving activity terminated by a solution deemed to be satisfactory. Decisions that are reversible are more desired and people are willing to pay a premium for the ability to reverse decisions; though reversibility may not lead to positive or satisfactory outcomes.

Some decisions have a big influence on life and so it is natural to feel nervous that if one picks an incorrect or inappropriate decision due to ignorance, one will end up with bad consequences. Examples include choosing a major-subject of study, to accept a job offer in lieu of further studies, choosing a career out of certain possible choices, etc. Certain obstacles come on the way of decision making such as:

Lack of knowledge of the options open to you and lack of awareness of your strengths and weaknesses. Belief that there is a perfect career out there. In fact, no one career path is perfect; knowledge can help you find an option/path that satisfies most of your requirements

Belief that any decision you make is 100% binding and must be 'correct'. Few decisions are 100% irreversible and we are likely to make new career decisions throughout our lives. Also, none of us can predict the future perfectly and no one can control outside forces. This is because we can only predict under the given circumstances prevailing at a given point of time.

The Student Government Association (SGA) elects student representatives from each academic division to provide input and recommendations to the college. The SGA Constitution, approved by the College's Board of Trustees, details the purpose and responsibilities of the SGA. Supervisory responsibilities for the SGA reside with the Vice President of Student Services and the Student Activities Coordinator. The SGA's elected President serves as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees. Students contribute to college decision-making through interaction with faculty and staff and through active participation in campus clubs and organizations.

The ability to make effective choices and decisions is one of the most important competencies students need, including those students with learning disabilities, to be successful in life after high school. Promoting student self-determination provides an excellent framework to teach students how to make effective choices and decisions. Effective choices are those that the student will see as beneficial, and these models of self-determination can be used to teach students to make choices and decisions that (a) are consistent with what is most important and adoptable to them and (b) enable them to achieve more positive adult outcomes. A general overview of best practices in promoting and enhancing self-determination can be found in a previous ERIC digest (Wehmeyer, 2002). This digest specifically examines how instructional practices to promote self-determination can be used to help students with learning disabilities make effective choices and decisions.

II. A Decision Making Process

Identify your Options

What are the choices you have to make? e.g. What career path are you considering? What other options are there? You may want to talk to a Careers Consultant and/or do some research to check this out.

Gather information on your options and yourself

1. Examine the information and resources you already have. Seek out new information to fill any gaps. 2. Develop a real understanding of yourself - what are your skills, interests, values, personal qualities, strengths and weaknesses? Refer to the 'Assessing and Developing your Skills and Interests' and 'Identify your Career Options' Information Sheets for ideas on how to do this.

Evaluate Options

Use one or more of the evaluation techniques described in the information sheets mentioned above. If it helps, discuss your options with another person e.g. a Careers Consultant.

Review the Decision

Reflect on how you arrived at your final decision and how successful the outcome was. Think about how you can use the

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techniques you learned when making decisions in future.

Some Techniques for Decision Making

This is a list of easy, practical techniques that can be applied to simple or complex decisions. They share the assumption that circumspect analysis is the key to making good decisions. Many decisions are made with too little information and too little thought, in a non-deliberate way. You may have come across people who have not spent even five minutes for structuring and analyzing a decision and later land in wrong consequences. You should spend sufficient time to collect information and make reasoned decision. Gathering information, consulting people for more information, listing out options and alternatives, listing the pros and cons of each available option, clarifying values, goals, interests, and needs are some essential features of information processing for decision making. Practice yourself making decisions. You give permission to yourself to make mistakes and correct them as there is seldom a single 'right' answer.

- Note how these techniques provide a visible, structured, orderly set of factors involved in a decision, so that the decision maker can consider them in a thoughtful and coherent way.
- Some techniques are especially for whether-type decisions involving two-possibility decisions such as yes/no, either/or.

1. T-Chart

A T-Chart is an orderly, graphic representation of alternative features or points involved in a decision. In one form, it can be a list of positive and negative attributes surrounding a particular choice. Drawing up such a chart insures that both the positive and negative aspects of each direction or decision will be taken into account.

For example, what are the pros and cons of deciding to buy a sport utility vehicle?

PRO	CON
better visibility	higher insurance
safer structure	poorer gas mileage
can take off road	more expensive maintenance

In another form, two possible choices are listed, with the good points or arguments or effects listed for each. Suppose your company is trying to decide whether to create its own advertising or hire an agency.

Use Outside Agency	Write Ads In-House
professional work	faster product
expertise of ideas	better knowledge of product
media connections	use same ad in flyers

To fill out this latter form, more than two choices can also be included, and a list of negatives for each choice can be added as well.

2. PMI (Plus, Minus, and Interesting)

Edward de Bono refines the T-Chart idea into a three part structure, where PMI stand for plus, minus, and interesting. Here you first list all the plus or good points of the idea, then all the minus or bad points, and finally all the interesting points - consequences, areas of curiosity or uncertainty, or attributes that you simply don't care to view as either good or bad at this point (consequences that some people might view as good may be viewed as bad by others). The "interesting" category also allows exploration of the idea or choice outside the context of judgment--you don't have to evaluate the attribute into a positive or negative category.

- As simple as this technique seems to be, and as often as others will tell you, "Well, of course, everyone does that all the time", this is a very powerful but much neglected technique. Most people believe they list the pluses and minuses of a decision before making it, but in actual practice, many people make a decision or form an opinion *before* they consider the evidence in an orderly way. Only after they make a decision do they hunt around for reasons to somehow support it.
- For example, suppose you are on a jury and must decide the guilt or innocence of the accused (or to hold for the plaintiff or defendant in a civil trial, if you prefer). What happens on most juries is that after the members meet in the room and choose a foreman, a preliminary vote is taken. "Let's find out where we all stand now", the foreman might say. Unfortunately, beginning a decision making session this way creates more problems than it solves. Before the jurors have had time to think over the issues or to discuss them to clarify the facts, they are asked to give their opinions on some decision. Giving an opinion is, in our society, accompanied by an ego investment, because we do not like to be wrong. As a result, each juror becomes emotionally committed to his first opinion and will very often proceed to look for arguments and facts that support this opinion (and hence defend his ego), rather than listen thoughtfully to the facts and decide the case on its merits.
- If, on the other hand, the foreman says, "Instead of a preliminary vote on the case, let's work together to draw up a list, first of all the evidence that would argue for the defendant's guilt, then all the evidence that would argue for his innocence. And as we make the lists, we can also write down facts that are interesting but that don't necessarily argue either for guilt or innocence." Now all the jurors will work together, have the opportunity to ask questions and resolve doubts, consider evidence they might not otherwise have remembered, and can change their minds back and forth as many times as they want, all without a threat to their egos or their need to be correct. Notice that the PMI technique turns the jurors into collaborators, working together, instead of competitive debaters arguing for victory (rather than truth).

Kathleen, *et al.,* (1992) concluded that strategic decision makers are bounded rational, that power wins battles of choice, and that chance matters. The content of group norms is an important factor influencing the quality of group decision-making processes and that the content of group norms may be related to the group's proneness for groupthink (Postmes, *et al.,* 2001). The idea that adolescents are more inclined toward risky behavior and risky decision making than are adults and that peer influence plays an important role in explaining risky behavior during adolescence has been observed by Gardner and Steinberg (2005). Every day, people are inundated with decisions, big and small. Understanding how people arrive at their choices is an area of cognitive psychology that has received attention (Dietrich 2010). Overall Adult Decision-Making Competence (A-DMC) emerges in significant relationships with measures of socioeconomic status, cognitive ability, and decision-making styles. A-DMC appears to be a distinct construct relevant to adults' real-world decisions (De Bruin, *et al*., 2007). They found that increasing age and task complexity were related to greater comprehension errors and inconsistency in decision

making (Finucane, *et al.,* 2005). Prior irreversible investments of money, time, or effort referred to as sunk costs frequently lead to decisions to continue a chosen course of action despite that this is irrational. In support of a more inclusive theory subsuming escalation of commitment, the decisions were affected by both past and future outcomes and both gains and losses (Jullisson, *et al*., 2005). Kim, *et al*.,(2008) tested the possibility that older adults show a positivity effect in decision making, compared to younger adults. Krantz and Kunreuther (2007) considered many different insurance-related goals organized in taxonomy and found out the effects of context on goals, resources, plans and decision rules. The importance of developing a culture for group decision making and some of the advantages, disadvantages and effective practices in group decision making were brought out by Lunenburg (2010).

III. Methodology

The present paper deals with decision making skill of Secondary School students. The methodology of decision making skills requires building a Tool consisting of statements, some may be positive and some may be negative.

Tools

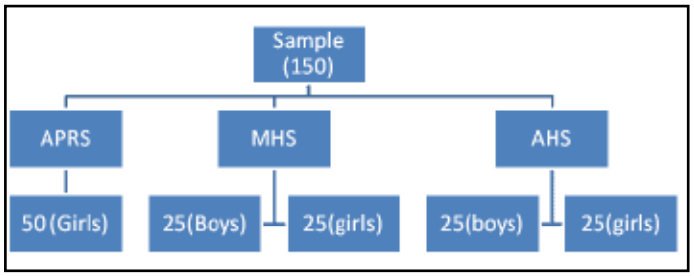
The tool was constructed by Dr. Venkatesha Murthy, C.G. RIE, MYSORE. The tool includes 25 statements in which '11' statements are negative statements, which receive scores like 1,2,&3 respectively for 'always', ' some times' and 'never' and remaining '14' statements are positive statements which receive 3,2 & 1 scores respectively for always, some times and never. Prior irreversible investments of money, time, or effort referred to as sunk costs frequently lead to decisions to continue a chosen course of action despite that this is irrational

Variables

Gender, Age, Area and Type of Schools were considered as independent variables, whereas Decision Making was considered as dependent variable.

Sample Design

The random sampling method is used for the purpose of sample selection using the variables Sex, Age, Area and Type of Schools. The sample of 150 Secondary School students in and around the Ananthapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh state, India, is used for the present study. They are from A.P. Residential High Schools (APRS), Municipal High Schools (MHS) and Autonomous High Schools (AHS).



IV. Statistical Analysis

Appropriate coding was given to facilitate statistical calculations. The data is entered in excel work sheet and the analysis is done by using S.P.S.S. software. The mean score between two groups are compared using 't' test. The mean score, S.D., mean difference and the 't' value statistics have been reported in the results and significant difference between the mean scores at 0.05, 0.01 levels are investigated.

V. Objectives

- To know the difference between boys and girls towards decision making capacity.
- To find out the difference between the age group of 14 and 15 years students towards decision making.
- To find out difference between locality of the students to take decision in problems.

VI. Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference between boys and girls towards decision making capacity.
- There is no significant difference between the age groups of 14 and 15 years old towards decision making.
- There is no significant difference between locality of the students in decision making.

VII. Analysis and Interpretation of The Data

Hypothesis – I

There is no significant difference between boys and girls towards Decision making skills. By employing 't' test to the above hypothesis, the results are shown in Table – 1

Table 1: MEANS AND SDs OF SCORES OF BOYS AND GIRLS WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR DECISION MAKING SKILLS

Sex	Number	Mean	SD	't'-value
Boys	50	56.1	13.05	0.6 @
Girls	100	56.6	13.28	

@ t- value not significant at 0.05 level.

It is clear from the above table that the calculated t-value, namely 0.6 is less than the table value 1.98 for 148 at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in Decision making skills.

Hypothesis – II

There is no significant difference between the age groups of 14 and 15 years old in decision making. By employing 't' test to the above Hypothesis, the results are shown in Table – 2

Table 2: MEANS AND SDs OF SCORES OF BOYS AND GIRLS OF AGE 14 & 15 YEARS WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR DECISION MAKING SKILLS

Sex	Age	Number	Mean	SD	't'-value
Boys	14	25	53.5	13.2	2.8 *
	15	25	55.9	14.3	
Girls	14	50	52.5	14.86	1.4 @
	15	50	56.1	13.05	

* t – value significant 0.01 level. @t- value not significant at 0.05 level .

It is clear from the above table that the calculated t-value 2.8 is greater than the table value 2.68 for 48 df at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It is informed that there is significant difference between 14 and 15 years of boys in Decision making

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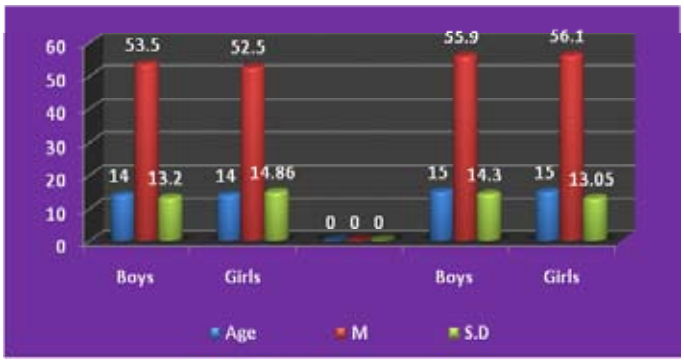
skills.
It is clear from the above table that the calculated t-value 1.4 is less than the table value 2.61 for 101 df at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It is reflected that there is no significant difference between the girls at age 14 and 15 years in Decision making skills.

Graph 1: Means and SDs of Scores of Boys and Girls at Age 14 & 15 Years with reference to their Decision Making Skills.



Hypothesis –III

There is no significant difference between the locality of the students in decision making. By employing 't' test to the above Hypothesis, the results are shown in Table –3.

Table 3: MEANS AND SDs OF SCORES OF LOCALITY OF THE STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR DECISION MAKING SKILLS

Sex	Locality	N	M	SD	't'-value
Boys	RURAL	25	55.5	12.96	2.7 **
	URBAN	25	53.9	13.58	
Girls	RURAL	50	55.5	12.96	1.6 @
	URBAN	50	53.9	13.58	

** t- Value significant at 0.01 level.
@ t- value not significant at 0.05 level.

It is clear from the above table that the calculated t-value 2.7 is greater than the table value 2.68 for 48 df at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference between the boys of Rural and Urban Schools in Decision making skills.
It is observed for the above table that the mean source of Rural and Urban Girls are 55.5 and 53.9 respectively. The calculated t-value 1.6 is less than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. It is inferred that there is no significant difference between the girls of Rural and Urban Schools in Decision making skills.

VIII. Conclusions

01. There is no difference between boys and girls in decision making skills.
02. There is significant difference between 14 and 15 years old boys in decision making skills.
03. There is no significant difference between 14 and 15 years old girls in decision making skills.
04. There is no significant difference between Rural and Urban girls in decision making skills.
05. There is significant difference between Rural and Urban boys in decision making skills.

IX. Educational Implications

1. *Think carefully about the questions you or someone else will need to answer to make an informed decision. Write those questions down. They will be the start of a plan to help you make a timely, quality decision.*
2. *Do the research you need to do to answer the questions. Develop supporting data. The more significant the decision, the more careful you will need to research. If the decision is irreversible, it clearly requires more consideration. If the decision is not irreversible, but would be costly to reverse, you will want to give it more consideration. If the decision has the possibility of high impact (on members, employees, revenues, etc.) you will want to give it more consideration.*
3. *Start with internal resources. Use historical data. Forecasts and colleague review. Use outside resources as needed: the Internet, a librarian, and a local college to find facts, data, stories and examples.*
4. *Get information that supports a rational decision while at the same time paying attention to the intuitive sense you have about the decision. That intuitive sense will be based on your experience. Your emotional side will certainly influence you. Be sure to understand the extent to which it does. Don't overreact based on past experience.*
5. *Gather information methodically but quickly. Develop a plan for gathering the information. Are you the sole person responsible for making the decision? Will you need to present the information to someone else or a committee? Will the decision be made by consensus? Be rational enough to satisfy decision making team.*
6. *The more knowledgeable you are the more confidence you will have in the decision you make. Be open to new options, rather than automatically staying with the status quo.*
7. *Don't procrastinate making the decision once you have sufficient information. Take a calculated risk. There is no perfect decision. How long do you want to allow yourself to make the decision once you have the information? A day, a week, a month?*

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