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Comparative Analysis of Decision-Making Styles: A Study of Male and Female Perspectives

Abstract

This study aims to explore the differences and similarities in decision-making styles between males and females. The research involved collecting data from 77 individuals, including 23 males and 54 females, to gather data on their general decision-making styles, factors considered in decision-making, legal decision-making approaches, perception of risk, information processing methods, and influence of societal expectations.

The findings reveal that both males and females prioritize logical reasoning and societal impact in their decision-making processes. However, females tend to consider personal values, past experiences, social and familial influences, risk perception, and emotional intuition to a greater extent, while males focus more on factual analysis. In legal decision-making, both genders prioritize legal precedent and logical reasoning, with females also considering social, family and environment implications and males focusing more on case law.

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Both males and females perceive a moderate level of risk in decision-making and are willing to take risks if necessary while females tend to take lower risk than males. They also share similar approaches to information processing, such as analyzing facts and personal experiences, but females may rely more on seeking advice from others, while males trust their intuition and research more thoroughly.

Regarding societal expectations, both genders believe that these expectations have some influence on their decision-making, with females perceiving a slightly higher influence.

In conclusion, while there are differences in the factors considered and the decision-making styles between males and females, there are also many similarities. Understanding these differences and similarities can provide valuable insights for improving decision-making processes and gender-differentiated approaches in decision-making contexts.

Introduction

Decision-making is a fundamental aspect of human behavior, influencing individual choices, organizational outcomes, and societal developments. Understanding the factors that shape decision-making styles is crucial for improving decision-making processes and outcomes. One area that has garnered attention is the differences and similarities in decision-making styles between males and females. While existing research has explored various aspects of decision-making, including

cognitive processes, emotional influences, and risk perceptions, there is still a need for a comprehensive comparative analysis of decision-making styles between genders.

The decision-making process is undeniably influenced by our perceptions of sex-based characteristics, often relying on criteria that may be dubious. Despite societal advancements toward gender equality in social and labor domains, it remains crucial to scrutinize whether there are inherent sex-based disparities in the factors individuals prioritize during decision-making. Current research findings are somewhat inconclusive, as while certain significant differences have been detected, the majority of disparities appear marginal.

Research Question: The primary research question for this study is: What are the differences and similarities in decision-making styles between males and females?

Hypothesis: Based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks, we hypothesize that -except environmental factor, emotional intuition, and lower risk perception- there are no differences in decision-making styles between males and females.

Literature Review

There are splendid ideas among different societies toward the appointment of females as judges. Some countries, for example; however, advocate for women's rights to be preserved, while these countries do not allow women to sit on a bench of the judgment.

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The first female judge assigned to the Supreme Court of Canada was O'Connor. There are rationales that restrict women from appointment as judge. Justice Wilson argues that women view the world differently from men, and that female judges often bring this alternative perspective to bear on the cases they decide. She argues that the addition of more women to the bench could make a difference in the law, if "women judges, through their differing perspectives on life, can bring new humanity to bear on the decision-making process. (SUSAN W. JOHNSON AND DONALD R. SONGER: 265 p)

In addition, research shows the difference between men and women in the attractiveness as well. "The analysis of attractiveness ratings showed that this is the case: again, we found that sexual attraction is relatively less permeable to moral factors in men, or, conversely, sexual attraction is more permeable to moral factors in women." (Julio González-Alvarez :532p) It shows; however, the emotional differences between males and females, but it can be implemented in judgment as well as females are more emotional than men.

Women are not only emotional, but they are influenced by the environment either. "It seems that women are more affected by the environment; they look for more information, and dedicate more time to the decision process. Men, on the contrary, are more dominant, assertive, objective, and realistic (Maria L. et al.: p 383). In many societies, including Afghanistan,

traditional gender roles often dictate that males are expected to be more decisive and assertive in decision-making, while females are expected to be more nurturing and collaborative. These stereotypes can impact how individuals perceive their own decision-making abilities and can influence their behavior in decision-making contexts.

A research has shown that despite producing the identical work product as a man, a woman's work is often regarded as inferior. In fact, there have been many investigations in organizational psychology that attest to the fact that unless the quality of the work product is incontrovertible, women's accomplishments are undervalued as compared to those of men. Moreover, it appears that the more women are viewed in stereotypic terms, the more likely this is to occur. (Madeline E. Heilman: 662 p)

Also contributing to the devaluation of women's performance is the tendency to interpret the same behavior differently depending upon who the actor is. It has been demonstrated that when actors are of different sexes, the implication drawn from their behavior is quite different. Thus, in work setting a behavior such as frequent phone conversation is a good deal more likely to be seen as slacking off for a woman but productive for a man. Similarly, waiting to make a decision rather than acting immediately may seem passive coming from a woman but prudent coming from a man. Consequently, disconfirming performance information, rather than prompting a

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revision of the negative expectations held for women, can server to maintain or ever reinforce them. (Madeline E. Heilman: 662 p) “Thus, women are more concerned with uncertainty, doubts, and the dynamism that are involved in the decision. They place more value on time and money; they are more concerned about the consequences that may derive from the decision, no matter whether these affect them or other people. Women are more aware of the constraints that the setting and close persons put on them, and their emotions are more important to them in the decision process. Conversely, men assign more importance to the analysis of the information required to carry out the decision and to the definition of the goals or purposes of the decision. They are more motivated during the process and also feel more intensely the pressure from all the work-related aspects.” (Maria L. et al.: p 387) The research is quantitative, not qualitative. We tried to conduct our research in qualitative manner.

Surprisingly, the existence of gender differences in propensity to take risks has been documented in a large number of questionnaire and experimental studies. For example, a meta-analysis by Byrnes, Miller, and Schafer (1999) reviewed over 150 papers on gender differences in risk perception. They concluded that the literature “clearly” indicated that “male participants are more likely to take risks than female participants” (Christine R. Harris: P 48) Relative to women, men reported a greater overall likelihood of engaging in risky

behaviors in the gambling, health, and recreational domains. In all three domains, women judged potential negative consequences as more likely to occur and they judged the potential negative consequences as significantly more severe in two of these domains (gambling and health). (Christine R. Harris: P 51).

On the other hand, research shows null sex difference between male and female in the aspect of general intelligence. The null sex difference in g suggests that: (a) The factor (g) that is present in nearly all measures of cognitive ability does not differ between sexes; (b) non- g factors and/or test specificity are responsible for the observed cognitive sex differences; and (c) the “paradox”—the findings of larger male brain, the association of brain size with IQ, and the absence of a sex difference in overall IQ—is not relevant to the problem of whether or not is there a sex difference in general intelligence, because there is no sex difference in general intelligence. (Roberto Colom: 34 p) unexpectedly, we analyzed the above mentioned literature and found that there are some differences between male and female in general.

Gender differences in decision-making have been a topic of interest across various fields not only in law, but also including in psychology, sociology, and management. Studies have shown that males and females often have different decision-making styles and approaches, influenced by various factors such as socialization, and emotional intuition.

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Research Method: To address the research question and test the hypothesis, a mixed-methods approach is employed. The study involves surveying a sample of individuals from both genders to gather quantitative data on their decision-making styles, perceptions of risk, information processing methods, and experiences with societal expectations and gender stereotypes in decision-making. Additionally, qualitative data is gathered to gain deeper insights into the underlying factors shaping decision-making styles.

The sample consists of 77 individuals, split between males and females, to ensure a representation of both genders. Participants are asked to respond to a series of questions related to their decision-making processes in general, as well as in legal contexts. Data analysis involves both quantitative methods, such as statistical analysis of survey responses, and qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis. In addition, a library-based data-gathering method is also used in the research to analyze the previous research and address the scarcity of the field.

Results

Results of the present research can be categorized into three domains: A- Analyzing the male data, B- Analyzing the female data, and C- Comparison of male and female decision-making styles. All three domains are described as follows.

A- Analyzing the male data

Various patterns can be analyzed regarding their decision-making styles and factors influencing their decisions as follows.

Decision-making Style: Male participants generally describe their decision-making styles as logical, considering various factors before making a choice. In contrast, females mentioned a collaborative decision-making style, indicating a preference for seeking input from others.

Factors Considered in Decision-Making: Both participants often consider past experiences and logical reasoning when faced with difficult decisions. This suggests a reliance on both personal history and rational analysis in making choices.

Legal Decision-Making: When faced with legal decisions, participants tend to consider legal precedents, case law, and statutory interpretation. This reflects a reliance on established legal principles and frameworks.

Perception of Risk: Participants generally perceive risk in decision-making, with most indicating a moderate likelihood of taking risks in hypothetical scenarios involving risk.

Information Processing: Participants commonly process information by analyzing facts and figures, researching thoroughly, and relying on personal experiences.

Societal Expectations: While both genders believe societal expectations influence their decision-making, the extent varies.

B- Analyzing female data

Analyzing the female data, several trends can be observed regarding their decision-making styles and factors influencing their decisions.

Decision-Making Styles: Many females describe their decision-making style as logical and collaborative, considering personal values, past experiences, and emotional intuition. They emphasize fairness, non-discrimination, and societal impact in their decision-making.

Factors Considered in Decision-Making: Personal values, past experiences, and logical reasoning are common factors considered. Additionally, females also mention the influence of peer and social or familial influence in their decisions.

Legal Decision-Making: Legal precedent, logical reasoning, statutory interpretation, and social implications are key factors considered in legal decision-making for females.

Perception of Risk: Females generally perceive risk in decision-making from moderate to high level, with a willingness to take no risks if necessary.

Information Processing: They tend to analyze facts and figures, seek advice from others, and research thoroughly when making decisions. In legal judgments, they rely on analyzing legal precedents, statutory interpretation, and legal research.

Influence of Societal Expectations: Most females believe societal expectations have some influence on their decision-making, though not extremely significant.

These findings suggest that females exhibit diverse decision-making styles influenced by personal values, logical reasoning, and societal and familial impact, with a commitment to fairness and non-discrimination.

C- Comparison of male and female decision making styles

Comparing the data of males and females from persons 1 to 77, several differences and similarities can be observed in their decision-making styles and factors influencing their decisions as described below.

Decision-Making Styles: Males and females both emphasize logical reasoning in their decision-making. Females are more likely to consider personal values, past experiences, and emotional intuition, while males focus more on logical reasoning and factual analysis. In addition, females far more rely on statutory interpretation than males.

Factors Considered in Decision-Making: Females tend to consider a wider range of factors, including personal values, past experiences, logical reasoning, emotional intuition, and societal and familial impacts. Males also consider logical reasoning and societal impact but may rely more on factual analysis.

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Legal Decision-Making: Both genders consider legal precedent and logical reasoning in legal decision-making. Females may also consider social and family implications and statutory interpretation, while males may focus more on case law.

Perception of Risk: Astonishingly, a narrow difference arose between males and females in the extent of risk perception; as males tend to take more risk than females do. Females and males perceive risk in decision-making quite differently, with a moderate perception of risk and a willingness to take risks if necessary for males. Conversely, females tend to take fewer risks.

Information Processing: Both genders analyze facts and figures and may rely more on personal experiences when making decisions. Particularly, females stated they seek advice from others, while males may trust their intuition and research more thoroughly.

Influence of Societal Expectations: Both genders believe societal expectations influence their decision-making, though females may perceive this influence to be slightly higher. Additionally, males are assertive and independent and not influenced by society or family. In contrast, females are more influenced by societal expectations. A female respondent stated that society and family influence us from a very early life.

Overall, while there are some differences in the factors considered and the decision-making styles between males and females, there are also many similarities. Both genders

prioritize logical reasoning and societal impact in their decision-making, with females tending to consider a broader range of factors, including personal values, emotional intuition, and familial and societal implications, while males may focus more on factual analysis and tend to be assertive and decisive.

Discussion

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the differences and similarities in decision-making styles between males and females. The study's mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative responses.

Decision-Making Styles: The analysis revealed that females tend to exhibit a more holistic approach to decision-making, considering personal values, emotional intuition, and societal and familial impact. In contrast, males appeared to focus more on analytical reasoning and factual evidence. These findings align with existing literature suggesting that females may prioritize interpersonal and contextual factors in their decision-making, while males may lean towards more logical and objective considerations.

Perceptions of Risk: Interestingly, both genders perceived risk at a different level, with an average score around the midpoint of the scale. This suggests that risk perception may not be significantly similar between males and females. Additionally,

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when faced with hypothetical scenarios involving risk, males were slightly more likely to take risks than females.

Information Processing: In terms of information processing, both genders exhibited similar approaches, such as analyzing facts and figures, seeking advice from others, and researching thoroughly. However, females also emphasized relying on statutory interpretation, indicating a more subjective element in their decision-making process.

Societal Expectations and Gender Stereotypes: Both males and females reported a moderate influence of societal expectations on their decision-making. However, only a few females mentioned feeling pressure to conform to gender stereotypes in decision-making, while no males reported experiencing this pressure. This suggests that while societal expectations may play a role, they may not be a primary factor influencing decision-making styles.

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore and compare the decision-making styles of males and females, focusing on factors such as risk perception, information processing, and societal influences. The findings suggest that while there are some differences between the decision-making styles of males and females, there are also many similarities.

Females tend to consider peer and family influence, seeking advice, and societal impact in their decision-making, while

males are tend to be more assertive, independent, and risk accepting and focus more on analytical reasoning and factual evidence. These differences reflect broader societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles and decision-making. Both men and women generally view decision-making risks as moderate and are open to taking risks when needed, though women tend to opt for less risky choices compared to men. They both employ similar strategies in processing information, such as analyzing facts and personal experiences. However, women may lean more towards seeking advice from others, while men often trust their intuition and conduct more extensive research.

Concerning societal expectations, both genders acknowledge that these expectations play a role in their decision-making, with women perceiving a slightly stronger influence than men. Future research could explore additional factors that may influence decision-making styles, such as cultural differences or individual personality traits. Additionally, replicating this study with a larger and more diverse sample could provide further insights into gender differences in decision-making.

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