

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ADEQUATE DECISION-MAKING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Decision-making is a fundamental skill that influences both academic success and personal development among university students. Adequate decision-making, defined as rational, socially appropriate, and context-sensitive choices, is shaped by multiple psychological and social factors. This study investigates the relationship between personality traits and adequate decision-making in university students. Utilizing the Big Five Inventory (BFI) and situational judgment tests, data were collected from 150 students across different faculties. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that conscientiousness positively correlates with adequate decision-making, while high neuroticism negatively affects decision quality. Extraversion, openness, and agreeableness showed moderate and context-dependent influence. Findings suggest that personality traits significantly impact students' decision-making abilities, highlighting the importance of personality-aware educational interventions. Implications for academic counseling and training programs are discussed.

Keywords: Personality traits, adequate decision-making, university students, Big Five, socio-psychological factors.

Introduction

Decision-making is a critical cognitive and social skill that underpins successful functioning in academic, personal, and professional contexts. For university students, the ability to make adequate decisions affects not only academic performance but also social relationships and emotional well-being. Adequate decision-making is defined as the capacity to make choices that are rational, contextually appropriate, and socially acceptable (Ross & Nisbett, 2011).

Previous research has demonstrated that cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, and social influences all contribute to decision-making quality. Among these factors, personality traits play a particularly important role. Individual differences in traits such as conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extraversion can either facilitate or hinder adequate decision-making (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

This study aims to explore the socio-psychological relationship between personality traits and decision-making adequacy among university students, focusing on the following research questions:

1. Which personality traits are most strongly associated with adequate decision-making?
2. How do emotional and social aspects of personality influence decision quality?
3. What practical strategies can be derived for educational interventions based on these findings?

2. Theoretical Background . Methodology

Several models have been proposed to understand personality traits. **Allport's dispositional theory** emphasizes individual uniqueness and consistent behavior patterns across situations (Allport, 1937). **Cattell's 16 personality factor model** provides a more structured approach, quantifying traits that influence behavior in various contexts (Cattell, 1946).

The **Big Five model**, however, has emerged as the most widely used framework in contemporary research. It categorizes personality into five broad dimensions:

- **Extraversion:** Sociability, assertiveness, and activity level.
- **Agreeableness:** Cooperation, empathy, and social harmony.

- **Conscientiousness:** Organization, self-discipline, and goal-oriented behavior.
- **Neuroticism:** Emotional instability, anxiety, and vulnerability to stress.
- **Openness to Experience:** Creativity, intellectual curiosity, and adaptability (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

2.2 Decision-Making and Adequacy

Decision-making is influenced by cognitive, emotional, and social factors. Adequate decisions are characterized by rational evaluation, awareness of social norms, and effective adaptation to situational demands. **Rational choice theory** suggests that individuals maximize utility, while **bounded rationality** emphasizes cognitive limitations and emotional influences in decision-making (Simon, 1979).

2.3 Relationship Between Personality and Decision-Making

Empirical studies indicate that **conscientious individuals** demonstrate better planning and evaluation, resulting in more adequate decisions. **Neurotic individuals** often make impulsive or emotionally-driven choices, reducing decision quality (John et al., 2008). Extraversion and openness influence social and creative aspects of decisions, whereas agreeableness may support collaborative and ethically appropriate decision-making.

3. Methodology

The study included 150 undergraduate students aged 18–25 from multiple faculties. Gender distribution was balanced, and participation was voluntary.

3.2 Instruments

- **Big Five Inventory (BFI):** 44-item questionnaire assessing five personality dimensions.
- **Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs):** Scenarios simulating academic, social, and ethical dilemmas, measuring decision adequacy.

3.3 Procedure

Participants completed the BFI and SJTs in both online and in-person formats. Each scenario required selection of the most appropriate response from multiple options, rated for adequacy.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were conducted using SPSS 28. Significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

- Mean conscientiousness score: 4.1 (SD = 0.6)
- Mean neuroticism score: 2.8 (SD = 0.7)
- Mean decision adequacy score: 78/100 (SD = 10)

4.2 Correlation Analysis

- **Conscientiousness:** $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$
- **Neuroticism:** $r = -0.54, p < 0.01$
- **Extraversion:** $r = 0.31, p < 0.05$
- **Agreeableness:** $r = 0.28, p < 0.05$
- **Openness:** $r = 0.35, p < 0.05$

4.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression indicated that personality traits collectively predicted 48% of variance in decision adequacy ($R^2 = 0.48, F(5,144) = 26.5, p < 0.001$). Conscientiousness emerged as the strongest positive predictor, while neuroticism had the strongest negative effect.

Table 1. Correlation between personality traits and decision adequacy

Trait	r	p-value
Conscientiousness	0.62	<0.01
Neuroticism	-0.54	<0.01
Extraversion	0.31	<0.05
Agreeableness	0.28	<0.05
Openness	0.35	<0.05

Figure 1. Regression model of personality traits predicting decision adequacy

(A diagram illustrating positive effect of conscientiousness and negative effect of neuroticism, with other traits showing moderate effects.)

The findings confirm that personality traits significantly influence adequate decision-making among university students. **Conscientiousness** facilitates planning, organization, and evaluation, enhancing decision quality. Conversely, **neuroticism** undermines rational decision-making due to heightened emotional reactivity. Extraversion and openness contribute to social and creative aspects of decision-making, while agreeableness supports socially appropriate choices.

These results align with previous research (Costa & McCrae, 1992; John et al., 2008) and highlight the socio-psychological dimensions of decision-making. Educational interventions should incorporate personality-aware strategies, including workshops on self-regulation, stress management, and reflective decision-making.

5. Conclusion

Personality traits are critical predictors of adequate decision-making in university students. Conscientious and emotionally stable students demonstrate higher decision quality, while neurotic tendencies hinder performance. Educational and psychological programs should address these traits to foster better decision-making skills, improving academic success and personal development.

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