

SMART

JOURNAL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDIES

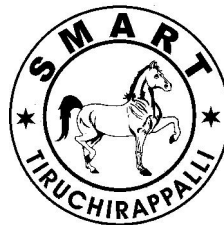
Vol.3

No. 1

January - June 2007

ISSN 0973 - 1598

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SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT AND ADVANCED RESEARCH TRUST
(SMART)

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (INDIA)

<http://www.geocities.com/smartbard>

A STUDY OF DECISION MAKING SKILLS OF PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

A successful professional requires decision making skill. The present study is an attempt made by the investigators to study the decision making skill of professionals in relation to certain select demographic variables. The sample of the study consists of 100 professionals in Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu. Significant differences are found in the decision making skill of professionals with respect to locale, educational qualification, nature of employment, age and experience. Men and women professionals do not differ significantly in their decision making skill.

1) Introduction

Decision making is one of the most important human skills. Both at the personal level and also in the context of organization, decision making skill strongly affects the quality of life and success. Decision making skill is fundamental to management education (Bazerman, 1986 and Huber, 1980). In short, it is a vital skill of the professionals.

A major focus of research on decision making is the frequent departure from the purely rational choice (Kahneman, Slavic and Tversky, 1982). According to Simon (1976), making a choice that is good enough is the most common decision strategy. Social psychologists consider decision making as a matter of conflict resolution and avoidance behaviour due to situational factors (Janis and Mann, 1977). Rappoport and Summers (1973) discuss the role of probability and the limits to the processing capacity for human judgement. Most theories emphasize that decision making consists of a number of steps or stages such as problem recognition, identification of alternatives, evaluation of alternatives, selection and action. Cognitive processes such as memory, reasoning

and concept formation play an important role in decision making. Attitude, creativity and problem solving are also related to decision making. Decision making is adversely affected by anxiety and stress. In this present study, the investigators have attempted to study the decision making skill of professionals in relation to certain select demographic variables.

2) Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are

- a) To find out the decision making skill of the professionals.
- b) To find out if there is any significant difference in the decision making skill of the professionals in terms of their gender, locale, educational qualification, nature of employment, age and experience.

3) Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were tested for their significance.

- a) Men and women professionals differ significantly in their decision making skill.
- b) Rural and urban professionals differ significantly in their decision making skill.

- c) Graduate and Post Graduate professionals differ significantly in their decision making skill.
- d) Self employed and employees differ significantly in their decision making skill.
- e) Professionals belonging to different age groups differ significantly in their decision making skill.
- f) Professionals who vary in their level of experience differ significantly in their decision making skill.

4) Methodology of the study

The investigators adopted the survey method for the present study.

a) Sample

The study has been based on a random sample of hundred professionals from different professions in Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu.

b) Tools

Decision making scale of Likert's type, constructed and validated by the investigators, has been used. It is a five-point scale. The reliability of the tool is found to be 0.82. The scale contains twenty-two statements. A professional can score a maximum of 110.

c) Analysis of data

Descriptive and inferential statistics have been employed for testing the hypotheses. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, 't' test and ANOVA. The results of 't' tests for significant difference between mean decision making scores of professionals in terms of gender, locale, educational qualification and nature of employment are presented in Table I and Table II which illustrate the analysis of variance on the decision making scores of professionals with respect to age and experience.

5) Discussion of results of the study

The mean decision making scores of the entire group of professionals is found to be 79.34 and 9.56 respectively. The mean score of 79.34 for the maximum of 110 (72.7%) for the entire sample indicates that the decision making skill of the professionals is very high.

a) Gender

In order to find out whether there is a significant difference in mean decision making scores of men and women professionals, 't' value was calculated. The calculated 't' value of 0.056 is found to be less than the table value. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the decision making scores of men and women professionals.

b) Locale

In order to find out whether there is a significant difference in the mean decision making scores of rural and urban professionals, the 't' value was calculated. The calculated 't' value of 4.379 is greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence it is concluded that rural and urban professionals differ significantly in their decision-making skills. Rural professionals have more decision making skill than their urban counterparts.

c) Educational Qualification

In order to find out whether there is a significant difference in the decision making scores of graduate and post graduate professionals, 't' value was calculated. The 't' value of -4.124 is greater than the table value at 0.01 level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the decision making skill of graduate and post graduate professionals. Post graduate professionals have more decision making skill than graduate professionals.

d) Nature of Employment

In order to find out whether there is a significant difference in the decision-making skill between self-employed professionals and those who are employees, the 't' value was calculated. The 't' value is found to be 5.189 and it is significant at .01 level. Hence it is inferred that there is a significant difference between self-employed professionals and those who are employees in their decision-making skill. Self-employed professionals have more decision-making skill.

e) Age of the Professionals

The mean decision-making scores of the professionals belonging to different age groups *viz.*, below thirty years, between thirty to fifty years and above fifty years are found to be 82.66, 74.71 and 75.00 respectively. The F value is found to be 9.786 and it is greater than the table value at .01 level. Hence it can be inferred that there is a significant difference in the decision-making skill of professionals with respect to age at .01 level of significance. The decision-making skill of the professionals belonging to the age group below thirty years is the highest.

d) Experience

The mean decision-making scores of professionals who vary in their experience *viz.*, below ten years, between ten to twenty years and above twenty years are found to be 80.79, 75.92 and 73.75 respectively. The F value is found to be 3.19 and it is greater than the table value at .05 level of significance. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the decision-making skill of professionals with respect to experience. The decision-making skill of professionals with experience below ten years is the highest.

6) Conclusion

1. The decision-making skill of professionals is high.
2. Men and women professionals do not differ significantly in their decision-making skill.
3. There is a significant difference in the decision-making skill of professionals with respect to their locale, educational qualification, nature of employment, age and experience.

7) Implications

In this study, decision-making skills of professionals are found to be high. It is better to appoint young professionals, post-graduates and professionals hailing from villages in an organization. It is also better to provide more opportunities for self-employment. Productivity of an industrial organization will increase if the professionals have more decision-making skills.

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Table- I
Comparison of the decision making scores of professionals with respect to gender, locality, educational qualification and nature of employment

S. No	Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Std error of the mean	't'	Level of significance
1.	Gender						
	Men	66	79.38	9.36	1.15	0.056	Not significant
Women	34	79.26	10.07	1.73			
2.	Locale						
	Rural	53	82.96	10.25	1.41	4.379	Significant at 0.01 level
Urban	47	75.26	6.76	0.99			
3.	Educational Qualification						
	Graduate	52	75.83	6.78	0.94	-4.124	Significant at 0.01 level
Post graduate	48	83.15	10.68	1.54			
4.	Nature of employment						
	Self employed	38	89.47	10.40	1.69	5.183	Significant at 0.01 level
Employed	62	75.89	7.12	0.90			

Source : Primary Data

Table -II
F value of decision making skill scores of professionals with respect to age and experience

Variable	Sources of valuation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Level of significance
Age	Between groups	1518.194	2	759.097	9.786	Significant at 0.01 level
	Within group	7524.246	97	77.570		
	Total	9042.440	99c			
Experience	Between groups	557.982	2	278.991	3.19	Significant at .05 level
	Within group	8484.458	97	87.469		
	Total	9042.44	99			

Source: Primary Data