



Research Article

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## The Gender and Academic Year Difference among Vietnamese Undergraduates' Attitude towards Decision Making Related to Solutions in Life

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### Abstract

Modern civilization is undergoing tremendous change at a breakneck pace, bringing both possibilities and difficulties to our everyday existence. Under these conditions, youngsters, particularly undergraduates, are frequently confronted with situations requiring them to make a choice. The ability to make decisions about many aspects of social life includes the following: medical, health, sexuality, mating, and professional route. As a result, education in decision making skills is critical in our era. This study was conducted with the major aims was to explore the differences in undergraduates' attitude towards decision making skill regard of their genders and academic years. 697 individuals were randomly recruited from six colleges around the country using a random sample approach. According to the findings of our study, there was no statistically significant difference between the views of males and females, nor was there a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of freshmen and seniors.

**Keywords:** Solution, decision making, Vietnamese, undergraduate, skills

### 1. Introduction

There is a significant deal of rapid change taking place in modern society, and this development presents both opportunities and problems for our day-to-day existence. On the one hand, the rapid advancement of cutting-edge technology and scientific fields, as well as the process of globalization, continue to raise the standard of life for people all over the world. On the other side, they may be responsible for the depletion of natural resources, degradation of the environment, conflicts and acts of terrorism, as well as unemployment, and other societal ills. Making a decision is a mental process that seeks to pick the best possible options that are available to individuals in light of their current

condition, which may be related to work or relationships with other people, in order to achieve the intended goals.

Undergraduate students today are confronted with such a plethora of unfavorable and potentially hazardous circumstances that they are unable to make timely selections that are pertinent to their circumstances. When it comes to one's physical and emotional well-being, the stage of young adulthood is considered to be the most satisfying of all. The undergraduate students have the aspiration to triumph over their adversity, the passion to investigate an ocean of information, and the drive to establish their individuality. However, because youngsters lack life experience, they are more likely to find themselves in precarious circumstances and succumb to the allure of unhealthy lives.

## 2. Literature Review

These conditions may be related to either work or relationships with other people (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 2015). In addition, decision-making is a process that involves selecting, from a pool of alternatives or potential courses of action, the most advantageous alternative or course of action based on a set of established criteria or strategies. It is the process of considering various potential courses of action, contrasting those options, and selecting one to pursue (Wang & Ruhe, 2007). The ability to make judgments in the face of unanticipated occurrences and conflicting scenarios, as well as the capacity to discern the logic of individual decisions, are both extremely important skills. Academics place a strong emphasis on these topics because of the significance of decision-making abilities (Nagib, 2002).

In his book "Thinking and Deciding," Jonathan Baron argues that the most important part of decision making is selecting the appropriate actions. In addition to that, he asserted that our aims and beliefs are what determine our ability to make sound decisions. Simultaneously, in his opinion, the processes of thinking will eventually regulate the processes of decision-making (Baron, 2000). According to the authors of the book "Making Decisions That Matter: How People Face Important Life Choices," Kathleen M. Galotti and Carleton Cozzege, the advice that we should verify our target, build up a plan, collect the information, come up with different decisions, choose the optimal decision, make different decisions in different areas, and develop those ones, is contained in the book. This advice is particularly relevant when it comes to important life decisions. The writers of the book assert that this is the fundamental approach one should take when making decisions in life (Galotti, 2005). Hassan Qudrat-Ullal, the author of the book *Complex Decision-Making Theory and Practice*, pointed out the importance of making an appropriate decision, how to improve the effectiveness of decision-making, the method of making a complex decision, and future orientation in the process of making the complex decision (Qudrat-Ullal, 2008). The ability to make decisions pertaining to various aspects of a person's social life comprises the following: (1) medical, health, sexuality, mating, job route,... (Murphy & Longo, 2009). Research is being conducted on the skill of decision-making not only in the context of 21st-century skills but also in a variety of other domains. According to the findings of this study, one of our abilities is decision-making, which entails selecting the most suitable course of action from a number of potential avenues in order to address the challenges of daily life in a timely and efficient manner. Constructiveness, potential, and ownership of the context are important factors that should be considered while evaluating the efficacy of the chosen solution.

Students should place a high priority on developing their ability to make sound decisions (Le, 2012). The capacity to select and put into action the solution that is best for oneself from among a number of potential possibilities for resolving an issue is referred to as decision-making talent (Demirbaş-Nemli, 2018). The act of making decisions itself is an excellent way to hone and improve one's decision-making abilities. When making a decision, the first step is to establish if a problem or an opportunity currently exists (Kinicki, Williams, Scott-Ladd, & Perry, 2011; Wang & Ruhe, 2007). After that, he or she should think about the various other options available. After then, he or she needs to consider all of the options and pick one of them. It is important to evaluate potential

alternatives not only with regard to their prices and levels of quality, but also in terms of their viability from an ethical and practical standpoint (Derto, 1997; Kinicki et al., 2011). In the end, he or she is responsible for putting the chosen solution into action and evaluating its effectiveness. Two considerations are required in order to guarantee that the implementation will be successful: careful preparation and consideration for the people who will be affected. When conducting an analysis of a decision, one has the option of giving the activity more time, making some tiny tweaks, attempting another alternative, or beginning the process all over again if it does not work (Sullivan & Decker, 1998).

The ability to make sound decisions is often regarded as one of the most important abilities of the 21st century (Nguyen, Van Bui, Thi, Thi, & Chi, 2021). Every day, we are faced with a myriad of decisions in our lives, some of which are important to our careers, some to our personal relationships, and still others to our entire existence as a whole. We are able to improve our self-assurance, independence, and level of achievement because of the assistance that we receive from DMS in determining the most effective response to challenging scenarios. People who lack the ability to make decisions are more likely to have incorrect attitudes and behaviors, which can have detrimental repercussions not just on the individuals, but also on their families and society as a whole (Le, 2012). DMS teaches people how to deal with the challenges that life presents. Students' development of decision-making skills could be facilitated by providing them with an understanding of the fundamental phases involved in decision-making. Then it is vital to give them opportunities to apply that information to realistic settings such as pointing out their aim, controlling their schedule, acting and communicating, and getting rid of social problems,... among other things. Teaching kids how to make good decisions and providing them with practice in making those decisions is both a prerequisite for and a source of incentive for developing other abilities relevant to the 21st century, such as critical thinking, creativity, recognizing values, and setting goals,... Therefore, the teaching of decision-making skills is absolutely necessary for this day and age.

It is widely acknowledged that one of the most important talents for success in the twenty-first century is the ability to make sound decisions (Nguyen et al., 2021). However, a significant number of today's graduates are lacking in a range of abilities, including the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to be creative, the ability to analyze and critically think, the ability to solve problems, and the ability to make sound decisions (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012; Ross & Cornish, 2003). According to a study that was conducted by Ong et al. (2014) in Vietnam, up to 83 percent of students who have graduated in the past are considered to have deficiencies in their soft skills, and 37 percent of students are unable to acquire work due to a lack of abilities that are required for the job. Successful career planning requires numerous decisions, the ability to define goals and then the knowledge of how to achieve them, and career decisions are typically among the most difficult you will ever face, and never more so than during your undergraduate years (Zheng et al., 2022). An investigation conducted by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs found that more than 13 percent of students who graduate from undergraduate programs each year have a need for additional skills training or re-education; nearly 40 percent of students have a need for additional workplace support; and 41 percent have a need for extended time to adjust to new workplaces (Nhan, 2018). The research conducted by Zaghair and Mohamad (2019) on a sample of 400 students from Alyarmouk University, half of whom were male and half of whom were female, found that females exhibited superior decision-making abilities than males due to the gender characteristics associated with women. As a consequence of this, educational institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to place a premium on educating future graduates to be more adaptable to the requirements of the community, as well as on matching the talents of graduates to skills for their future careers (Neo & Neo, 2001).

Education is more than just the completion of courses; it is also a preparation for growing personal abilities such as problem-solving and decision-making, which are all important for professional success (Bellack & O'Neil, 2000). Education is more than simply the completion of coursework. The studies that were carried out by Ersoy et al. (2019) and Fan (2016) have demonstrated that it is essential to instruct learners in the skill of decision-making, and that the

process of improving decision-making among learners has a positive impact on improving their academic achievement and the development of higher thinking skills. Students who have strong decision-making abilities will have a better chance of achieving high academic accomplishment and maintaining stability in their lives (Le, 2012).

These kinds of decisions can be as easy or as difficult to make as needed, depending on the nature and complication of the situation, as well as the number of challenges it poses (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Because making decisions is such a crucial part of an individual's personal and professional life, these decisions should never be left up to the possibility of coincidence or divorced from the context in which they will be carried out (Hammond et al., 2015). When it comes to making decisions, it is the most challenging activity that a person will encounter throughout the course of their lives. A method that is defined as the apparent option among two or more other possibilities (Rimawi & ALMasri, 2021).

In today's times, in this era of globalization, in this era of rapidly shifting markets, and in this era of ever-increasing competition, the ability to make decisions is becoming an increasingly crucial skill (Walter, 2010). Students who are unable to make sound decisions are more likely to demonstrate inappropriate attitudes and actions, which can have detrimental effects not just on the students individually but also on their families and society as a whole (Le, 2012). These college students have the responsibility of making decisions that will either assist them in achieving their academic goals and adjusting to life at university (Al-Aajam, 2018; Simi, Kovaevi, Svirevi, & Simi, 2017) or make mistakes that will cause them to fall short of their goals academically (Al-Aajam, 2018; Simi, Kovaevi, Svirevi, & Simi, 2017).

Although a lot of publications have touched on the topic of decision-making abilities in high school students, relatively few have concentrated on decision-making skills in undergraduates, particularly their attitude toward the decision-making process. Following an analysis of the prior research, we will describe the objectives of the current study. One of the primary purposes of this research was to investigate the many ways in which first-year college students of both sexes and varying academic years perceive the importance of having good decision-making skills.

### **3. Methods**

#### *3.1 Participants*

Participants were chosen using a random sampling procedure and came from six different colleges located all around the country. Only first-year students and high school seniors made up the sample for this investigation. Undergraduate students from Hanoi National University of Education (n = 138), National University of Civil Engineering (n = 119), Foreign Trade University (n = 120), Vinh University (n = 102), Hong Duc University (n = 114), and Hue University (n = 104) were selected at random to participate in the survey. The questionnaires for the survey were given out to 750 Vietnamese undergraduates, and 697 of those questionnaires were returned, which gives us a return rate of 93.33 percent. This response rate is higher than the typical response rate of thirty percent, which was approved for use by the vast majority of researchers in order to analyze the data (Dillman, 2000). A total of 697 students participated in this research study, and their responses were used to compile the sample for this study. There were 500 female undergraduates who participated in the survey, which is significantly more than the 197 male undergraduates who did so. The number of first-year students to seniors who participated in the study was relatively low; specifically, 351 first-year students and 346 seniors responded to the questionnaire.

#### *3.2 Measurement*

The questionnaire that was used for this investigation was prepared by the writers of this paper. The goal of this activity was to determine the participants' perspectives on their ability to make decisions.

This questionnaire is developed for undergraduate students. This self-reported questionnaire consists of four questions, each of which symbolizes a distinct level of severity when it comes to the decision-making process. In the process of developing this questionnaire, the following stages are involved: The literature research served as the basis for the first stage of the process, which consisted of constructing an open-ended questionnaire on decision making ability. After that, we gathered some preliminary data for the official questionnaire by conducting a survey with a sample size of fifty undergraduate students. In the second step of the process, an official questionnaire is developed by making use of questions and answers that are pertinent to determining the participants' perspectives on their ability to make decisions.

For data analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was utilized. The coding procedure was performed as follow: 1 = Seldom, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Often, 4 = Usually, 5 = Always. To convert discrete data to rankings, the distance value was calculated as  $(\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum})/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8$  (Malhotra, Hall, Shaw, & Oppenheim, 2006).

### 3.3 Procedure

On the written consent forms, participants who volunteered to take part in the survey were required to sign their names. This form established their rights while they participated in the research and informed them that I their responses would only be used for scientific purposes and that the information would be made public anonymously, and (ii) they were free to stop participating in the survey at any time they wished while it was being conducted. To get started, all participants need to fill out the General Information forms, which require them to reveal their gender and the number of years they have spent in school. After that, the participants were given instructions to ensure that they had a complete understanding of the questionnaire as well as the method for scoring it. The kids were assured that the confidentiality of their responses would be maintained, and there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. All that was required of them was to answer with their own thoughts and experiences from their own lives.

## 4. Results

### *Gender differences in the undergraduates' attitudes towards decision making skill*

In order to investigate how students, feel about their ability to make sound decisions, the first step is to investigate how male and female students differ in their perspectives on this topic. The perspectives of male undergraduates and female undergraduates towards the ability to make decisions are compared in table 1, which shows the discrepancies between the two groups.

**Table 1:** Gender differences in the undergraduates' attitudes towards decision making skill

Items	Gender	n	M	SD	p
I ignore the problem	Male	197	2.44	1.070	0.095
	Female	500	2.30	1.000	
I solve the problem only when other people ask me to do	Male	197	2.57	1.196	0.378
	Female	500	2.49	1.058	
I predict the tendency of the problem so that I can prevent it	Male	197	3.45	1.259	0.467
	Female	500	3.52	1.004	
I ready to cope with different problems or circumstances	Male	197	3.71	1.157	0.432
	Female	500	3.78	1.045	

Results from this table shows that male undergraduates ( $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 1.070$ ) scored higher than females ( $M = 2.30$ ,  $SD = 1.000$ ) in items "I ignore the problem". Similarly, male students ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD =$

1.196) tend to *solve the problem only when other people ask them to do* more frequently than female students ( $M = 2.49, SD = 1.058$ ).

On the contrary, females rated higher scores in the positive items. Particularly, female participants were more likely to *predict the tendency of the problem so that they can prevent it* (Females:  $M = 3.52, SD = 1.004$ ; Males:  $M = 3.45, SD = 1.259$ ). Besides, in comparison to male students ( $M = 3.71, SD = 1.157$ ), female students were more *ready to cope with different problems or circumstances* ( $M = 3.78, SD = 1.045$ ).

The findings are indicative of two different things. To begin, men solved the issue with a lower level of caution and consideration than women did; rather, they lacked consideration and caution while making decisions. Second, before settling on a solution to an issue, females give it a lot of thought before selecting a choice.

Despite this, the gender disparities that were observed did not constitute a statistically significant finding because the  $p$  value was more than 0.05. Therefore, the value of this result is exclusively applicable to the sample that was used in this research; it cannot be generalized to any other sample.

*The difference between freshmen's attitudes towards decision making skill and seniors' attitudes.*

The table 2 indicates the difference between freshmen's attitudes towards decision making skill and seniors' attitudes.

**Table 2:** The difference between freshmen's attitudes towards decision making skill and seniors' attitudes

Items	Gender	n	M	SD	p
I ignore the problem	Freshman	351	2.33	1.008	0.776
	Senior	346	2.35	1.037	
I solve the problem only when other people ask me to do	Freshman	351	2.51	1.123	0.902
	Senior	346	2.52	1.075	
I predict the tendency of the problem so that I can prevent it	Freshman	351	3.46	1.089	0.354
	Senior	346	3.54	1.074	
I ready to cope with different problems or circumstances	Freshman	351	3.79	1.072	0.500
	Senior	346	3.73	1.084	

In terms of careless decision-making items, the scores representing their attitudes towards decision making skill differed approximately small. Particularly, both freshmen and seniors occasionally *ignored the problems* (freshman:  $M = 2.33, SD = 1.008$ ; senior:  $M = 2.35, SD = 1.037$ ); and often *solved the problem only when other people ask them to do* (freshman:  $M = 2.51, SD = 1.123$ ; senior:  $M = 2.52, SD = 1.075$ ).

Noticeably, seniors seemed to *predict the tendency of the problem so that I can prevent it* more frequently than freshmen (freshman:  $M = 3.46, SD = 1.089$ ; senior:  $M = 3.54, SD = 1.074$ ) while they were less likely to *be ready to cope with different problems or circumstances* compared to freshmen (freshman:  $M = 3.79, SD = 1.072$ ; senior:  $M = 3.73, SD = 1.084$ ).

However, while the  $p$  value was more than 0.05, the results did not demonstrate any differences that could be considered statistically significant between the freshmen and the seniors. As a direct consequence of this, the conclusion reached in this study can only be applied to the sample that was used in the study and cannot be extrapolated to any other group.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which participants' perceptions of their own decision-making abilities vary depending on whether they are male or female, as well as how these

perceptions change over the course of their academic careers. The findings of this investigation revealed some surprising information, including the following: (1) there was no statistically significant difference in the attitudes held by males and females; and (2) there was no statistically significant difference in their attitudes held by freshmen and seniors. The participants in our research were the only ones whose opinions differed in any discernible way in relation to their decision-making abilities, despite the fact that our study uncovered some small inconsistencies in the individuals' perspectives.

To begin, our findings indicate that when examining the gender differences in students' attitudes towards decision making skill, females in this survey were likely to make decisions more carefully and take the problems into account more often than males did. This was discovered when examining the gender differences in students' attitudes towards decision making skill. This finding is consistent with the findings of prior studies, which asserted that there is little difference between men's and women's performance on any given endeavor (Deaux, 1984). The gender gap is a contentious issue that can be debated at any time; nevertheless, in this particular study, researchers were able to identify the gender gap. This could be explained by the fact that males and females have distinct individual characteristics that make up their personalities. It is commonly accepted that females are perceived to be more cautious and reluctant than males (Cohn; Harden, 2001). Although thoughtful deliberation is thought to be essential, there is a possibility that opportunities will be missed if one does not act quickly (LeClair, 2010). On the other hand, spontaneous and swift judgments allow us to capitalize on life's possibilities; however, if we make decisions without due analysis and care, we may make poor choices (Connolly & Zeelenberg, 2002; McKenna & Martin-Smith, 2005). On the other hand, spontaneous and swift judgments allow us to capitalize on life's possibilities.

The second finding from our research was that our participants' perspectives on their ability to make decisions in reference to the academic year varied slightly from one another, and our study was able to document these variations. However, statistical analysis did not support the significance of these findings. The first theory that could account for such results is that all of the individuals included were educated inside the same educational system, regardless of the academic year, and were thus influenced by the same set of values. As a consequence of this, there was a possibility that they had a tendency to think and behave in the same way (Astrachan, Harrow, & Flynn, 1968; Madrigal & Kahle, 1994). The second point of contention is that over this period of time (beginning with their first year at the university and continuing through their final year), these individuals do not experience major shifts in their personalities, which leads to a limited amount of diversity in their perspectives. Notably, the third hypothesis proposes that both first-year students and elderly citizens were going through a period in which they were anxious, pressured, confused, and unsure of themselves. While the underclassmen were getting used to a brand-new environment in which they would meet new people, use a new learning platform, apply a new learning method, live independently, and suffer from homesickness, the upperclassmen were getting ready to step outside of their comfort zone and enter a completely new world (Jones et al., 2020; Rathakrishnan et al., 2021; Ricks, Warren, & Practice, 2021). Any action that they do under those circumstances will have a huge impact on the path that they choose in the future. It's possible that this is the reason why both of them are exercising such extreme caution when deliberating over their choices.

The current research does, of course, have two important caveats. To begin, the people who took part in our study were not distributed in a uniform manner; more specifically, the percentage of female participants was exactly 2.5 times higher than the percentage of male participants. This skewed distribution could lead to inaccurate conclusions being drawn. Second, because there was just a single data collecting session, the participants' self-reported views regarding their ability to make decisions may have been more impacted by the state of their affections at the time of the survey than by their consistent attitudes. After all is said and done, this study continues to serve as an ideal jumping off place for further discussion and analysis. In the future, additional research will be necessary to address these deficiencies and delve deeper into the subject matter in order to develop

solutions that will help young people improve their ability to make sound decisions.

## 6. Conclusion

We determined that one of our traits is the ability to make decisions, which enables us to choose the most appropriate response from the various options that are presented to us in order to successfully and promptly cope with the obstacles that life presents. The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether or not there are differences in the opinions of undergraduates regarding their capacity to make decisions based on either their gender or their academic year. This analysis revealed three startling findings: first, there was no statistically significant difference in attitudes towards decision making skill between males and females; second, there was no statistically significant difference in attitudes towards decision making skill between freshmen and seniors; and third, there was no statistically significant difference in attitudes towards decision making skill between those who had recently graduated and those who were still

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