

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND CAREER DECISION MAKING AMONG ADOLESCENTS AT SECONDARY AND HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL**

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### **Abstract**

*As students enter the secondary and higher secondary level, they face a crucial decision of career decision making. One of contributing factor in career decision making is autonomy. In current study, the relationship between autonomy and career decision making. Career decision making indicator (CDMI) and Index of Autonomous Functioning (IAF) along with demographic sheet was administered on a sample of 384 students of class 9th, 10th, 1st and 2nd year. The age range of participants was 14 - 21. Results indicated that there is significant positive relationship between autonomy and career decision making. Autonomy is the significant predictor of career decision making among students. Females scored significantly lower on career decision making. was positively related to autonomy and career decision making.*

**Keywords:** *Career Decisiveness, Career Indecisiveness, Autonomy, Gender Differences, Age Differences.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

*Career decision making, being most crucial decision, serves as a blueprint of a job in one's life. Latif and colleagues (2016) pointed out the difficulty one can face during the process. According to Egbgo (2017) career comprises of an overall experience accumulated during lifetime. He further*

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*added that careers serve as a process of learning to earn living.*

*Career decision making consist of defining a goal and directing efforts to achieve the desired outcomes. During the process individual make transition from school to career (Kumar, 2016). Career decision making is a process of deciding about future developmental course. Since career is lifelong pursuit, it servers as source and pattern of earning. It also impacts individual's personality as well as grooming and professional success attained by that person in his life (Kirdok, 2018).*

*Career decision making comprises of two components; career decisiveness, also defined as a certainty about career choice and the individual is self-assured; whereas career indecisiveness, comprises of uncertainty and inability to decide about future goals and career choices. When person is caught in career indecisiveness, he or she experiences restrictions and uncertainty (Kanwal & Naqvi, 2016).*

*Zahra and Malik (2018) pointed out the crucial stage for career decision making lies after middle and high school. It is the time when individual faces necessary career choices. They pointed out during this crucial time there is lack of sufficient decision-making skills due to different personal and social skills.*

*McElhaney et al. (2009) defined autonomy as the ability to think and feel as separate entity. An autonomous person is able to take one's own decision without interference from others. Hoang (2015) expressed autonomy as the ability to express oneself and take considerate actions.*

*Research have suggested that females are less preferred and socialized as compared to males. Males enjoy more freedom in making their own choices, equally favored by parents. Females are less autonomous since they face hinderance in making autonomous choices (Esteinou, 2004). Oztemel (2013) reported that females face more difficulty in career decision making as compared to males.*

*Baltaci et al (2020) conducted a study on the relationship between career decision making and autonomy and found that career decision making is significantly related to autonomy. manifestation of this appearance-focus could be comparing their body with other women's bodies as a guide for how to look and a gauge for their relative attractiveness. Given that many women learn that their worth is equivalent to their appearance, another manifestation of this appearance-focus could be women's decreased self-worth if they do not match*

up with societal ideals. By integrating these approaches, we further addressed whether women who frequently monitor their appearance also frequently compare their bodies against other women's bodies, as well as the interactive contribution of these variables to women's Disordered eating Method

## **OBJECTIVES**

*The objectives of the current study are as under:*

- 1. To explore the relationship between autonomy and career decision making.*
- 2. To explore the impact of autonomy on career decision making.*
- 3. To assess the gender differences on career decision making.*

## **HYPOTHESES**

- 1. There is positive relationship between autonomy and career decisiveness.*
- 2. Autonomy is negatively related to career indecisiveness.*
- 3. Autonomy is a significant predictor of the career decision making.*
- 4. Gender differences will exist with respect career decision making.*

## **DEFINITION OF VARIABLES**

### **CAREER DECISION MAKING.**

*Career decision making is defined as continued life process, in which individual make career choices based on personal attributes and basic values about life (Phifer, 2003). Career decision making indicator (CDMI) (Al-Kalbani, & Salleh, 2010) is used to assess the career decision making. It is further categorized into career decisiveness and career indecisiveness.*

### **AUTONOMY.**

*Hoang (2015) defined autonomy as having mastery while expressing one's personality, feeling and ideas. Autonomy was assessed by using Index of Autonomous Functioning (Weinstein et al., 2012). Higher scores indicate higher level of autonomy.*

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

*The research design used for the present study is cross-sectional survey.*

## **SAMPLE**

*The sample of the study consisted of 384 male and female students of secondary and higher secondary levels with an age range of 14-21. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the participants from public and private school and colleges.*

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

*In current research two scales were used to collect the data; Index of Autonomous Functioning and Career decision making indicator along with*

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demographic variables. Career decision making indicator (CDMI) (Al-Kalbani, & Salleh, 2010)

Career Decision Making Indicator was developed by Al-Kalbani and Salleh (2010). It is a 40-item Likert scale. Each item is scored on a 5-point from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is further divided into two domains; career decisiveness and career indecisiveness. The scale has overall Cronbach alpha reliability of .93. Index of Autonomous Functioning (IAF) (Weinstein et al., 2012).

The Index of Autonomous Functioning is developed by Weinstein and colleagues (2012). The scale is a 15-item Likert scale with response categories of not at all true to completely true. The Cronbach alpha of the scale is .89.

### PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The data were collected using convenient sampling techniques. A sample of 384 students from public and private schools and colleges was approached in Abbottabad, Haripur and Mansehra. The participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research. They were briefed about ethical consideration while participating in the research. After obtaining the informed consent they were given questionnaire to complete. They were requested to fill the questionnaire honestly and after taking the complete questionnaire they were thanked for their valuable participation.

### RESULT

The following test were applied on the data after collection, correlation, regression and t-test for the hypothesis testing.

**TABLE 1**

Correlation among autonomy, career decisiveness and indecisiveness among students (N = 384.)

Measure	1	2	3	M	SD
1. Autonomy	-	.223***	.257***	47.74	5.51
2. Career Decisiveness		-	.009	52.04	7.65
3. Career Indecisiveness			-	64.27	14.85

Note.  $p > .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 1 indicates that there is significant positive relationship between autonomy and career decisiveness. Results illustrated that the more an

individual is autonomous the higher the level of career decisiveness. Whereas there is significant negative relationship autonomy and career indecisiveness. Results illustrated that as autonomy increases the career indecisiveness decreases.

**TABLE 2**  
*Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Autonomy as Predictor of Career Decisiveness among Students (N=384)*

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	$\beta$	F	SE
IAF	.223	.050	.310	.223	20.08	.069

*Note. IAF = Index of Autonomous Functioning.*

Results in above table indicate that autonomy is the significant positive predictor of career decisiveness. Autonomy explains 5% variation in career decisiveness ( $B = .310, p < .001$ ).

**TABLE 3**  
*Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Autonomy as Predictor of Career Indecisiveness among Students (N=384)*

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	B	F	SE
IAF	.257	.066	-.692	-.257	27.03	.133

*Note. IAF = Index of Autonomous Functioning.*

Results in above table indicate that autonomy is the significant negative predictor of career decisiveness among students. Autonomy explains 6.6% variation in career decisiveness ( $B = -.257, p < .001$ ).

**TABLE 4**  
*Mean, standard deviation and t-value of males and females on Autonomy, Career Decisiveness and Career Indecisiveness among Students (N=384)*

Variable	Male (n=159)		Female (n=225)		(382)		Cohen's d
	D	M	D	M			
Career Decisiveness	0.3	.17	1.7	.67	2.07	039	19
Career Indecisiveness	6.2	2.3	7.9	2.5	1.44	151	14

Table 4 depicts the significant difference between males and females in career decisiveness, where females are more decided about career decision making. Whereas no differences were noted for career indecisiveness.

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### DISCUSSION

*The present study was aimed at finding the relationship between autonomy and career decision making. It explored how autonomy impact on two dimensions of career decision making that is career decisiveness and career indecisiveness. The study also examined the gender differences with respect to career decision making. The population of the study consisted of students of class 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year from public and private institutes. Two scales Career Decision Making Indicator and Index of Autonomous Functioning were used to collect data. Both scales had higher alpha reliability coefficients, thus making them reliable to use with the current population.*

*The results indicate that autonomy is significantly related to career decision making. Autonomy is significantly positively related to career decisiveness. The results are in line with the previous literature. Paixão and Gamboa (2022) reported that there is significant relationship between the autonomy and career decisiveness. Similar findings were also reported by Cullaty (2011), who studied the relationship between autonomy and career decision making. Baltacı et al. (2020) also reported the relationship between autonomy and career decision making.*

*Results in table 2 indicate that autonomy is the significant predictor of the career decisiveness and it explains 5% variation in the career decisiveness. Increased autonomy caused increased career decisiveness ( $B = .310, p < .001$ ). Baltacı et al. (2020) studied the relationship between autonomy and career decision making. According to Baltacı and colleagues, autonomy and career decisiveness are interrelated, and autonomy predicted the career decisiveness.*

*Results in table 3 indicate that autonomy is the significant predictor of the career indecisiveness, and the direction of the relationship is negative. It explains 6.6% variation in the career indecisiveness ( $B = -.692, p < .001$ ). According to Baltacı et al. (2020), autonomy is the significant negative predictor of the career indecisiveness.*

*Results also indicate that females scored significantly higher on career decisiveness, whereas no differences were found with respect to career indecisiveness. Fleming (2005) found the significant difference across gender in career decision making (see also, Esteinou, 2004). However, the results of both studies indicated that males are more career decisive compared to females. Similarly, Zubair (2012) conducted research on the gender differences with*

respect to career decision making and stated that males start career earlier and hence take career decisions earlier than females. Cultural factors make females financially dependent on family, that give them less autonomy, and there is less likelihood of making career decisions.

Results in table 4 indicated that there are non-significant gender differences in career indecisiveness. However, previous studies have reported that there are significant gender differences in career indecisiveness (Esteinou, 2004; Zubair, 2012).

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the study concluded that autonomy has the positive relationship with career decisiveness and negative relationship with career indecisiveness. Autonomy is the significant positive predictor of career decisiveness and significant negative predictor of career indecisiveness. Gender differences were noted with respect to career decisiveness, where females scored significantly higher as compared to males. No gender differences were found with respect to career indecisiveness.

## **LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Like all social studies the present study has certain factors that are assumed as boundaries or limitations, they are as under. The suggestions are also presented for future consideration in the research.

1. Data were collected from three districts, that may limit the geographical diversity of the participants, future researchers should collect data from other cities as well to get more variation in responses.
2. Response rate of the study was low as many of the students didn't return the questionnaire. Some of the students also showed non-serious attitude during data collection, so their questionnaires were excluded from the final data analysis.
3. The data were collected to convenient sampling technique. Future research should employ probability sampling techniques to get more confidence in the data.
4. The data were collected through self-reported measures, future researches should include other robust method to get more insight.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Career decision making is really important task in any youngster's life. The adolescents lack basic knowledge on career decision making, and are less autonomous. Parents, counsellors and teachers should take efforts to make adolescents more autonomous and guide them to be self-sufficient for their own

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choices in careers. School should hire educational psychologists and career counsellors to better address the career decision making need of the adolescents.

The findings of the research are also helpful for career counselors in understanding the relationship between autonomy and decision making among adolescents.



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