

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DECISION-MAKING STYLES OF SELECTED BARANGAY OFFICIALS

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ABSTRACT

A study on gender differences in decision-making style of barangay officials was conducted at Lubao, Pampanga. Twelve barangays were selected and the selected barangay officials in each locale were given a test to determine their decision-making styles. The constructs that were observed include rational, dependence, intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making styles. A total of 80 participants composed of 40 males and 40 females, answered the questionnaires. The mean values were statistically analyzed using correlation, f-test, and t-test. The only significant difference was obtained on the dependence of the male and female in making decisions. It was observed that the female was more dependent on others when it comes to decision-making. There were no observed differences on other decision-making styles between males and females, suggesting sameness level of rationality, intuition, avoidance, and spontaneity.

Keywords: *gender differences, decision-making styles, barangay official*

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the American Psychological Association made a clear difference between gender and sex, wherein gender was defined as the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity. On the other hand, sex was referred as a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex, atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female. There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia.

In the field of Psychology, gender differences have been thoroughly studied (Aillaud&Piolat, 2012). A meta-analysis of this research by Hyde (2007) concluded that men score higher in visual-spatial activity, aggressiveness (Burton,Hafetz, &Henninger, 2007) and in mathematic abilities (Hedges &Nowell, 1995) than women. In contrast, women score higher than

men, in communication (LaFrance, Hecht, & Paluck, 2003), verbal abilities, moral reasoning (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000) and emotion (Brody & Hall, 2000). Culture is an important factor to define the proper roles for males and females. It also shapes life and relationships of people. Besides gender and gender-role, social status of women also define their interpersonal relationships (Wink & Helson, 1993; Stewart, Ostrove, & Helson, 2001). It is also claimed that women perceive comforting skills, intimate communication, and interdependence to be more important than men do generally. Moreover, emotional sharing is also considered to be a more common strategy for women than men to facilitate intimacy. Therefore the provision of social and emotional support is more likely to be a function of women's relationships, with women both receiving and providing more emotional and social support than men in times of unhappiness or distress (Fischer & Manstead, 2000; Toussaint & Webb, 2005; Boden & Berenbaum, 2007).

From the existing researches, it is evidently seen that decision – making styles will vary by gender (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004). In studying this topic, the researchers aim further understanding about gender differences when it comes to decision-making styles specifically with the barangay officials of Lubao, Pampanga.

Decision making is defined as the process by which a choice between alternatives is chosen in order to achieve the objectives of an organization (Murrey, 1986). It is also mentioned that decision-making is a function of the individual information and one's personal ideology and concerns (Weiss, 1983). Moreover, decision-making is an authoritarily effective process where individual values and beliefs are the bases for such a process (Petrides & Guiney, 2000). Decision-making style is a characteristic which makes an individual understand the decision-making task and how one will respond to it (Jacoby, 2007). It is also defined as the normal form used in taking a decision.

There are five styles of decision making: 1. a rational style characterized by a rich research on alternatives and rational evaluation; 2. an intuitive style which is characterized by using the internal sensations and emotions in decision making; 3. a dependent style which is characterized by depending on the advice and tips from others; and 4. the avoidant style which is characterized by attempts to avoid the decision-making; and 5. the spontaneous style which is characterized by making quick decisions and often change their minds afterwards (Scott & Bruce, 1995). Since making decisions is part of everyday life, the researchers wanted to study how individuals decide on matters that do not only affect themselves but those who are around them.

Barangay officials, specifically from Pampanga were the participants in this study. Barangay officials are defined in this paper as those people that are dependent on the public at first. They are the ones who gets to decide whether they will vote for them to work for the community or not. Once someone has been elected, they are expected to be concerned with the whole population's dilemma (Smith & Suarez, 2005). This study may be able to help identify which leaders should be voted into public office.

Knowing what underlies the individual decision making style of Filipino politicians would be valuable not only for governance but also for the development of the country. The results of this study may also benefit the voters so they may choose the right candidate to lead their community. Studies have shown the importance of personal background in decision-making styles which refer to differences between individuals in information processing when solving problems and making decisions (Thunholm, 2008). In this paper, the researchers have solely focused on the differences of the gender of the barangay officials in decision making.

This study was anchored in the theory of Scott and Bruce (1995) on decision making styles. It states that, “*It is not one of the personality traits; but a tendency based on habit to interact in a certain way*” (p. 83). The theory believes that a person makes decisions based on the normal and learned form of response. This learned response is based on past experiences. The paper used the five types of decision-making styles that the theory advocates.

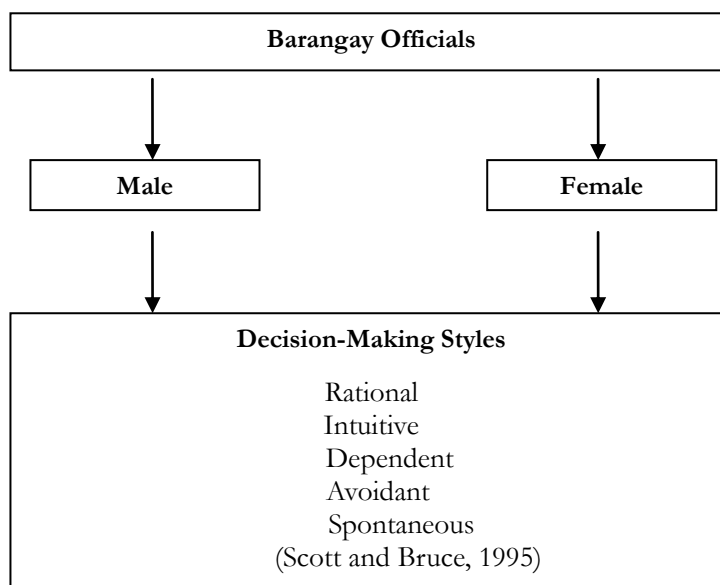


Figure 1: Gender of Barangay Officials and Decision-Making Styles

Furthermore, the researchers also affixed another theory in this study. Using the naturalistic theory, the paper investigated how people make decisions in real life situations, guided by experience and competitiveness in executing such decisions. (Lizarraga, Baquedno & Elawar, 2007).

Research Objectives

With the theories mentioned above, the researchers aimed to provide information about the gender differences in decision-making styles of selected barangay officials. Using the five decision making styles of Scott and Bruce, the paper aimed to determine which gender is more rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous in decision making. The research does not consider other demographic information of the participants such as age, civil status, educational attainment, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative explanatory design was applied in this study because it answers the questions of who, what, when, where, and how associated with a particular research problem. However, a descriptive study cannot decisively determine answers to why. Descriptive research was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomenon which is the decision-making styles of the selected barangay officials and to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

Research Participants

This quantitative study was conducted in Lubao, Pampanga. 12 urban communities from the 44 barangays from the locale were selected to participate. Sampling was based on the urbanization of the barangay as Lubao is considered a first class municipality. Participating barangays were the following: Baruya (San Rafael), Conception, Lourdes (Lauc Pau), San Juan (Pob), San Nicolas 1st (Pob), San Nicolas 2nd, San Pablo 1st, San Pablo 2nd, Santa Cruz, Santa Lucia (Pob), Santa Teresa 1st, and Santo Tomas (Pob). Distribution of study sample was in accordance to the designated local

positions (one Brgy. Captain and 7 Brgy. Councilors) through purposive sampling technique. Researchers used purposive sample because participants fit a specific description. Consent letters were signed for the acknowledgement of privacy and academic purposes only.

Research Instrument

The research used Scott & Bruce's Decision-Making Style instrument (1995). It has five factors: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant and a new factor named spontaneous. Each factor consists of 5 statements that had 5-point Likert scale choices (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Strongly Agree).

Data Gathering and Analysis

Psychometric testing was the main method of gathering data. The researchers requested a specific date for the administration of the tests on each of the 12 barangays. Letter of consent was given ahead of time as to legally inform the participants. The researchers made sure that there should be equal number of male and female participants. 80 barangay officials participated in the study.

The results of the tests were encoded before solving for the mean of each gender and the whole population per factor. Correlation coefficient was then used to know if the values (male, female, population) were related to each other. The results (mean of male, female and the whole population) were subjected to F-test to determine what type of two-tailed T-test will be used (equal variances or unequal variances). The researchers used two-tailed T-test because the study is interested to look into whether the mean would fall into the upper or lower limit of the decision-making styles.

The means that were computed tell whether the participants are rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, or spontaneous. The p-value of the f-test and the t-test was compared to $\alpha = 0.05$. The test showed the significance of variances with each decision-making style.

RESULTS

Table 1 made strong evidence with regards the gender difference relationship.

Factor 1: Rational, measures the level of rationality of male and female in making decisions. Males and females scoring highly in this factor were said to be more rational in their decisions. The results showed that there is 95% confidence that both the males and females have the same level of rationality hence it was safe to say that the participants were rational in making decisions. It appears that they make choices that will maximize benefits to them and minimize any costs. The findings also suggest that they have full or perfect information about the consequences of their choices. Furthermore, the results indicate that the participants have the cognitive ability and time to weigh every option that eventually lead to a choice.

Factor 2: Intuitive, measures the level of intuition of male and female in making decision. The individuals that scored highly in this factor were said to be using intuition in their decision-making style. In this factor, both male and female participants resulted to be intuitive. They tend to be feeling-oriented and has internal ordering of information and fact decision.

Factor 3: Dependent, measures the level of dependency of the participants in making decision. The results obtained prove that females were more dependent. They always ask and use the opinion of others when making decisions.

Factor 4: Avoidant, measures the level of avoidance of each gender in making decisions. It was found that males and females were not avoidant in making decisions. They do not possess any delay and denial characteristics.

Factor 5: Spontaneous, measures the level of spontaneity in making decisions. The results showed that the barangay officials were not spontaneous and hasty in deciding. The findings suggest that there is no sense of immediacy when it comes to decision making.

Table 1: Summary of decision-making styles of 80 barangay officials at Lubao, Pampanga.

Decision Making Styles	Mean		Variance		Ftest p-value	Ttest p-value	Remarks/Conclusion
	Male	Female n=40	Male	Female n=40			
Rational	4.36	4.445	0.45	0.38	0.31	0.56	both rational
Intuitive	3.53	3.845	0.43	0.63	0.12	0.06	both intuitive
Dependent	3.36	3.77	0.62	0.34	0.03	0.01*	female is more dependent
Avoidant	2.96	2.735	0.7	0.69	0.48	0.23	both not avoidant
Spontaneous	2.93	2.695	0.81	0.71	0.34	0.23	both not spontaneous

There was no significant difference observed when comparing male and female participants. This shows that the values obtained fits the values of the whole population which served as the standard data. The f-test and t-test values for male and female means of the population were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: F-test and t-test values for male and female means to population mean.

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Figure 2 shows the summary of the computed mean values for male, female, and the whole population. The graph shows the level of rationality, intuition, dependence, avoidance, and spontaneity in decision-making of the barangay officials in Lubao, Pampanga. It was observed that the only decision-making style where there is significant difference was the level of dependence of male and female when deciding.

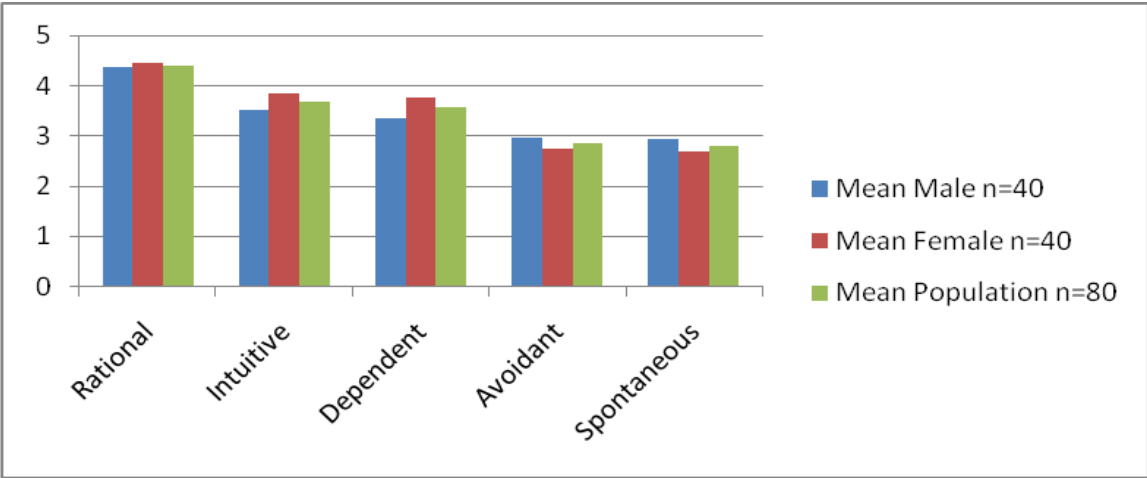


Figure 2: Decision-making styles of barangay officials in Lubao, Pampanga.

DISCUSSION

Results of the study indicate that male and female barangay officials from Lubao, Pampanga are rational decision makers. The decision-making skills of all participants are needed in order for them to handle their responsibilities. Findings also revealed that the respondents are intuitive. As intuitions are deemed to be truthful, it seems to guide the decisions of the respondents to consider the common good. Intuitions, too, seem to be the best route for individuals to fulfill their goals and, eventually, reach their destinations. People realize that intuition is essential in making good and right decisions, particularly to officials who are put in certain uncertain conditions (Agor, 1984; David, 2009).

Findings of the study pointed that females show higher dependency than males. This study supports the claims of Verma (2013) that women connections are more likely to be emotional especially since the right and left hemispheres of their brains. Findings of females' dependency also can explain why women are better in verbal communication and social task as they are more likely to ask and consider the opinion of other people around them. The research argues that this sense of dependency is actually more favorable to the whole community. Lastly, results confirmed that both male and female barangay officials, were not avoidant and were not also spontaneous in making decisions. Hence, this may explain why they have firm decisions. Such decision-making skill is crucial in handling a community as one erroneous decision would impact others.

This paper suggests that future researches on decision-making styles must consider age difference and its relationship to decision-making styles. It is also recommended that research be conducted in the area of new technologies where males are claimed to dominate the field (Venkatesh, et al 2000). Moreover, it is also interesting to examine gender differences with narrower age intervals, both in the active stage and at retirement. Also, it is recommended to thoroughly control participants' psychological and social characteristics (there may be notable differences among retired people). It may also be worthy of investigation to determine whether there is any relation between gender differences and educational attainment and whether the age differences in the importance assigned to factors that affect decisions can be interpreted from a perspective of general experience in the sense that as one gets older, one becomes more skilled at making decisions or from the viewpoint of specific expertise, which suggests that adults and retired people are only more skilled in the domains in which they are more knowledgeable.

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