

## Role of Cognitive Differentiation, Parental Influence and Gender in Career Decision Making

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### ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to find out the career decision making ability of career-oriented boys and girl students in relation to their parental influence and cognitive differentiation ability. Human beings are considered both rational and emotional beings. Making an appropriate career decision is really important to grow in careers that is why to study factors as cognitive differentiation, parental influence and gender targeted to study. To study these factors factorial design 2x2x2 with fixed effect model was employed using stratified random sampling.

**Keywords:** Career Decision Making, Cognitive Differentiation, Gender, Parental Influence

Career decision making refers to the process people go through when they search for viable career alternatives, compare them and then choose one. Harren (1979, p. 119) defined a decision-making model as a “description of psychological process in which one organizes information, deliberates among alternatives, and makes a commitment to a course of action.” Cognitive differentiation is the ability to differentiate among various job titles on the basis of vocationally relevant variables such as job value, prestige, income, power. Parental influence is one of the most important factors in adolescent’s career decision making, especially in Indian context. Whether it is male or female child, parents always play a major role in their children career. Adolescent’s decision are always governed and dominated by their parents and it affects all the aspects of their life. Parents exert strong influence on adolescents career choices (Vondracek & Porfeli; 2003; Ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, & van Wel, 2005; Wolfe & Betz, 2005). Parent-child relationships are the most important social and emotional resources well beyond the childhood years (Grotevant, 1998; Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg & Silk, 2002)

### METHODOLOGY

#### Sample

The sample comprised of two hundred and forty students. Students were aged between 16-18 years. Students were from different C.B.S.E. schools. All the students were taken from science and commerce stream of class 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. It was kept in mind that students belong from same socioeconomic classes as well.

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### Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

1. **Cognitive differentiation grid** first test used is Cognitive Differentiation Grid by (Leena Manchanda & Dr. B. Hasan, 1998). The test-retest reliability of this grid is .80 after an interval of two weeks.
2. **Parental influence schedule** the second used in this study is parental influence schedule which was prepared on the basis of adolescents' thinking and also keeping in mind the point of parental role and influence on them.
3. **Career decision making questionnaire (CDMS)** is constructed and standardized by Itamar Gati (1996). The decision making ability of adolescent students about their career choices. The Cronbach alpha test retest reliability of the scale is reported to be of 0.78 and the median test retest scale reliability 0.65. The cronbach alpha reliability of the total CDMS score was .95

### Procedure

Students of science and commerce faculties were listed randomly. All the subjects were divided as above and below average cognitive differentiation group. These subjects were assigned in two groups using cognitive differentiation Grid (Leena Manchanda & Dr. B. Hasan, 1998) and subjects were also given the parental Influence schedule. These finally selected subjects were put to score on career decision making scale (CDMS) constructed by (Vijya Tiwari and Dr. B. Hasan). Multiple regression and qualitative analysis method is used for the data interpretation.

## RESULTS

*Table No. 1 group wise Mean and s.d. scores of independent variables*

Groups	Cognitive differentiation		Parental influence		Gender	
	High C.D.	Low C.D.	High P.I.	Low P.I.	Male	Female
Mean	531.24	343.12	21.24	2.77	3.91	5.22
S.D.	62.81	42.91	12.56	1.58	1.50	.493

*Table No. 2 multiple regression scores of independent variables of the study*

Predictors	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-Ratio
Cognitive differentiation	.484	.234	.225	23.87**
Parental influence	.487	.237	.217	11.95**
Gender	.487	.237	.207	7.87**

As evident from table-2, the cognitive differentiation was the most important predictor of career decision making explaining 22.5% of variance. After that parental influence showed 21.7% of variance upon career decision making that is parental influence is secondary important factor in career decision making. The least important factor in career decision making was gender which showed 20.7% of variance that means factor gender make no difference while deciding a career.

## DISCUSSION

Present data of the study very strongly proved that cognitive differentiation is very much important in deciding a career. Appropriate amount of parental influence always plays an important role in adolescent's career decisions. Gender that is very much prominent variable in Indian context but proved less important in career decision making.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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