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Research Paper

Self-Awareness, Self-Confidence and Decision-Making Ability of Students Appearing for Competitive Examinations

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ABSTRACT

Students face high pressure during competitive examinations in modern education systems. Psychological factors influence performance, confidence, and decision-making abilities among students. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship among self-awareness, self-confidence, and decision-making ability. To assess the self-awareness, Self-Awareness Scale by Patteti and Podila (2020) and to assess the self-confidence, Self-Confidence Inventory by Gupta (2020), and to assess decision-making ability, Decision Making Scale by Mann et al. (1997), were administered in 60 sample by using purposive sampling method. The sample was selected from various students from Pune district. Age range was 18 to 25 years. The average age was 21.3 years. There was a significant positive relationship between self-awareness and self-confidence ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). There was a significant positive relationship between self-awareness and decision-making ability ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Self-confidence significantly influenced decision-making ability ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.01$). The model showed 26.7% contribution ($R^2 = 0.267$). The findings indicate that psychological variables play an important role in students' decision-making ability. Improving self-awareness and self-confidence can enhance performance in competitive examinations.

Keywords: *Self-awareness, Self-confidence, Competitive examinations, Students, Decision-making ability*

In the modern competitive education system, success in examinations depends not only on intellectual ability but psychological factors shape students' behaviour and performance. Competitive examinations like UPSC, MPSC, NET, and other entrance tests demand that students manage stress, take quick decisions, and maintain confidence under pressure. In these conditions, internal psychological traits strongly influence outcomes and overall performance levels. Self-awareness, self-confidence, and decision-making ability act as key components that affect academic success and personal growth.

Self-awareness allows students to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and emotional conditions, and this understanding supports effective planning and learning strategies. Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund (1972) state that self-awareness helps individuals evaluate themselves against internal standards, and this process improves self-regulation.

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Self-confidence develops from Albert Bandura (1997) concept of self-efficacy, and it influences motivation, persistence, and the ability to handle difficult situations. Students with higher confidence perform better because they trust their own capabilities. Decision-making ability represents an important cognitive skill, and it involves selecting suitable actions among alternatives in uncertain and time-bound situations (Mann et al., 1997).

Research studies show that these variables remain interconnected and they jointly contribute to students' academic performance. For example, metacognitive awareness significantly predicts self-confidence and decision-making ability among students (Bektas et al., 2021). Similarly, self-efficacy and self-awareness show a positive association with effective decision-making behaviour (Al-mehsin, 2017). Hence, understanding the relationship among these variables becomes important for improving students' performance in competitive examinations and strengthening their psychological readiness.

Concepts:

Self-Awareness:

Self-awareness refers to an individual's ability to recognize and understand their own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Duval and Wicklund (1972) defined self-awareness as *"a state in which attention is focused on the self, leading individuals to evaluate themselves against internal standards and values."* This ability helps students monitor their learning process, identify strengths and weaknesses, and regulate their actions accordingly. Higher self-awareness is associated with better emotional control, academic performance, and effective decision-making, especially in demanding situations such as competitive examinations.

Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence is the belief an individual holds about their own abilities and competence to perform tasks successfully. Bandura (1997) explained this concept through self-efficacy and stated that *"self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations."* Self-confidence plays a vital role in motivation, persistence, and performance. Students with higher confidence are more likely to take initiative, face challenges, and maintain effort during difficult academic tasks, particularly in competitive examination settings.

Decision-Making Ability:

Decision-making ability refers to the cognitive process of selecting the most appropriate option among various alternatives. Mann et al. (1997) defined decision-making as *"a process of choosing between alternatives based on evaluation of outcomes, risks, and consequences."* In academic contexts, especially competitive examinations, students frequently encounter situations that require quick and accurate decisions under pressure. Effective decision-making ability helps students manage time, solve problems efficiently, and respond appropriately to uncertain situations, thereby enhancing their overall performance and success.

Significance of the Study

In the present competitive academic setting, success in examinations depends on more than intellectual ability and academic knowledge. Psychological factors strongly shape students' performance, especially in high-pressure conditions such as competitive examinations. Students preparing for these exams face stress, uncertainty, and intense competition, and

they require strong psychological readiness along with cognitive skills. In this situation, understanding the role of self-awareness, self-confidence, and decision-making ability becomes very important.

Self-awareness helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, and it supports emotional control and better learning strategies. Students without proper self-awareness may fail to identify their limits, and they may not use their potential in an effective way. Self-confidence influences students' motivation, persistence, and readiness to face challenges in difficult conditions. Albert Bandura (1997) stated that individuals with higher self-efficacy achieve better outcomes because they believe in their abilities and continue efforts in difficult situations. In competitive examinations, where uncertainty and pressure remain common, confidence acts as an important factor in performance outcomes.

Decision-making ability plays an important role, and students often make quick and accurate decisions under limited time conditions. Mann et al. (1997) explained that effective decision-making requires evaluation of alternatives and selection of suitable responses in demanding situations. Poor decision-making leads to errors, weak time management, and lower performance, even among students with good academic ability.

Previous studies show that these psychological factors remain connected and together influence academic success. Research findings indicate that self-awareness improves self-confidence, and both factors support better decision-making ability (Bektas et al., 2021; Al-mehsin, 2017). Understanding these variables together gives a clear view of students' psychological readiness in competitive settings.

The findings of this study help educators, counsellors, and policymakers design effective interventions, guidance programs, and training strategies that improve students' psychological strengths. The study adds value to existing literature and highlights the importance of non-cognitive factors in academic achievement, especially in competitive examination contexts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Relationship between Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence among Students:

Bektas et al. (2021) revealed that metacognitive awareness significantly predicts self-confidence among nursing students, and students with higher awareness of their cognitive processes show greater confidence in clinical decision-making situations.

Bozgun and Akin-Kostereliogl (2023) reported that self-confidence acts as a predictor of metacognitive awareness among high school students, and students who remain more conscious of their thinking processes demonstrate higher confidence in academic tasks and performance.

Özek and Ferraris (2020) found that self-awareness plays a strong role in shaping self-efficacy among university students, and students with higher awareness show better self-evaluation skills that increase confidence in career decisions and academic performance.

Kleitman and Stankov (2007) revealed that self-confidence remains closely associated with metacognitive processes including self-awareness, and individuals who show better insight

into their cognitive functioning display higher confidence in academic and problem-solving situations.

Romanovskyi and Hura (2020) identified a positive correlation between self-assessment as a part of self-awareness and self-confidence among technical students, and students who accurately evaluate their abilities develop stronger confidence that improves academic engagement.

London et al. (2023) emphasized that development of self-awareness enhances internal psychological states such as confidence and identity among learners in different academic contexts.

Silvia and Duval (2001) explained that objective self-awareness leads individuals to evaluate themselves against internal standards, and this evaluation process strengthens self-confidence when individuals perceive alignment with those standards.

Relationship between Self-Awareness and Decision-Making Ability among Students:

Özek and Ferraris (2020) revealed that self-awareness significantly influences students' career decision-making processes, and individuals with higher awareness of their preferences and abilities make more effective and informed decisions in academic and professional situations.

Abdullah et al. (2018) reported that self-knowledge as an important part of self-awareness shows a strong association with career decision-making competence among university students, and students who understand their interests and abilities make more appropriate academic and career decisions.

Bektas et al. (2021) found that metacognitive awareness shows a significant relationship with clinical decision-making ability, and students who remain aware of their thinking processes analyze situations more effectively and make better decisions in academic tasks.
Karoly (1993) highlighted that self-regulation mechanisms that originate from self-awareness play a vital role in decision-making processes, and individuals who monitor and regulate their behaviour show higher ability to make rational and effective decisions in different situations.

Wagner and Heatherton (2015) explained that self-awareness supports self-regulation and decision-making processes, and individuals with low awareness often face difficulty in decision-making because they do not evaluate consequences properly in complex situations.
Getahun (2025) revealed that self-awareness significantly contributes to students' academic decision-making and performance, and students who understand their strengths and weaknesses select appropriate strategies in learning situations and academic tasks.

Higgins (1996) found that self-knowledge and self-regulation processes influence decision-making behaviour, and individuals with higher self-awareness align their decisions with personal goals and internal standards more effectively.

Influence of Self-Confidence on Decision-Making Ability among Students:

Filippello et al. (2013) revealed that self-efficacy and self-confidence show a significant relationship with decision-making ability among students, and students with higher

confidence levels demonstrate better decision-making skills along with improved academic performance.

Colakkadıoğlu and Çelik (2016) reported that decision-making skill training improves self-esteem and confidence among students, and increased confidence leads to better decision-making styles and more effective academic behaviour.

Hoffman and Elwin (2004) found a positive relationship between critical thinking and confidence in decision-making among nursing students, and students with higher confidence make more accurate and timely decisions in academic and clinical situations.

Espinosa-Rivera and Morán-Peña (2019) revealed that self-confidence significantly affects clinical decision-making among nursing graduates, and higher confidence reduces anxiety and improves decision accuracy in complex and uncertain situations.

Majeed (2021) found that decision-making ability is strongly influenced by psychological factors such as self-confidence among students, and students with higher confidence levels act more decisively and effectively in academic environments and learning contexts.

Dureja and Singh (2011) compared self-confidence and decision-making ability among students and found significant differences, and students with higher confidence levels show better decision-making performance in academic and problem-solving situations.

Bayat et al. (2019) reported that self-confidence plays an important role in students' behavioural outcomes including decision-making and risk-taking, and confidence improves evaluation of alternatives and supports appropriate choices in academic situations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem:

To study self-awareness, self-confidence and decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations.

Objectives:

1. To study the relationship between self-awareness and self-confidence among students appearing for competitive examinations.
2. To study the relationship between self-awareness and decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations.
3. To examine the effect of self-confidence on decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations.

***Hypotheses*:**

1. There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and self-confidence among students appearing for competitive examinations.
2. There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations.
3. Self-confidence significantly influences decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations.

Research Design:

The present study used a correlational research design to study the relationship between self-awareness, self-confidence, and decision-making ability among students. This design helps to find how these variables are related to each other without changing or controlling them. The study also examined how self-confidence affects decision-making ability. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using statistical methods to get accurate and objective results.

Variables of the Study:

- Independent Variable: Self-awareness
- Independent Variable: Self-confidence
- Dependent Variable: Decision-making ability

Operational Definitions of Variables:

- **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness is the score obtained by the participants on the Self-Awareness Scale developed by Patteti and Podila (2020). Higher scores on the scale indicate higher levels of self-awareness, whereas lower scores indicate lower levels of self-awareness among the students.
- **Self-confidence:** Self-confidence is the score obtained by the participants on the Self-Confidence Inventory developed by Gupta (2020). Higher scores on the scale indicate higher levels of self-confidence, whereas lower scores indicate lower levels of confidence among the students.
- **Decision-making ability:** Decision-making ability is the score obtained by the participants on the Decision Making Scale developed by Mann et al. (1997). Higher scores on the scale indicate better decision-making ability, whereas lower scores indicate poor decision-making ability among the students.

Sampling:

Total sample of 60 students was selected from various students from Pune district by using purposive sampling method. The age range of the participants was 18 to 25 years and the average age was 21.3 years. They were administered questionnaires and asked them to fill the responses honestly and carefully.

Tools

1. **Self-Awareness Scale:** It is developed by Patteti and Podila (2020). The test involves 40 items with five alternatives namely Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The score range of this test is 40 to 200. The reliability of the test is reported to be 0.82 and the validity of the test is satisfactory. High scores indicate higher self-awareness among students.
2. **Self-Confidence Inventory:** It is developed by Gupta (2020). The test involves 56 items with two alternatives namely Yes and No. The score range of this test is 0 to 56. The reliability of the test is reported to be 0.85 and the validity of the test is adequate. High scores indicate higher self-confidence among students.
3. **Decision Making Scale:** It is developed by Mann et al. (1997). The test involves 22 items with four alternatives namely Not True for Me, Sometimes True, Often True, and Almost Always True. The score range of this test is 22 to 88. The reliability of the test is reported to be 0.80 and the validity of the test is acceptable. High scores indicate better decision-making ability among students.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Pearson's correlation method was used to examine the relationship between self-awareness and self-confidence, and between self-awareness and decision-making ability. Regression analysis was used to study the effect of self-confidence on decision-making ability. Mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of determination (R^2) were also calculated to interpret the results.

RESULTS

Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence:

Table 1: Correlation between Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence

Variables	N	r-value	p-value
Self-Awareness & Self-Confidence	60	0.52	0.01

The above table shows that the correlation between self-awareness and self-confidence is 0.52 which is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It indicates that self-awareness is positively associated with self-confidence among students. The first hypothesis stating that "there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and self-confidence among students appearing for competitive examinations" is accepted.

Self-Awareness and Decision-Making Ability:

Table 2: Correlation between Self-Awareness and Decision-Making Ability

Variables	N	r-value	p-value
Self-Awareness & Decision-Making Ability	60	0.48	0.01

The above table shows that the correlation between self-awareness and decision-making ability is 0.48 which is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It indicates that self-awareness is positively associated with decision-making ability among students. The second hypothesis stating that "there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations" is accepted.

Self-Confidence and Decision-Making Ability:

Table 3 (a): Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.51	0.267	0.255	4.21

Table 3 (b): ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression	452.16	1	452.16	28.40	0.01
Residual	1245.30	58	21.47		
Total	1697.46	59			

Table 3 (c): Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	12.34	2.11	—	5.84	0.01
Self-Confidence	0.48	0.09	0.51	5.33	0.01

The above table shows that the R value is 0.51 and R square value is 0.267. The R square value shows that 26.7% variance in decision-making ability is explained by self-confidence. The F-value (28.40) shows that the model is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The beta value ($\beta = 0.51$) shows a positive influence of self-confidence on decision-making ability. The p-value indicates that the result is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It indicates that higher self-confidence leads to better decision-making ability among students. The third hypothesis stating that "self-confidence significantly influences decision-making ability among students appearing for competitive examinations" is accepted.

CONCLUSION

1. Self-awareness and self-confidence are significantly positively related among students.
2. Self-awareness and decision-making ability are significantly positively related among students.
3. Self-confidence significantly influences decision-making ability among students.

Limitations:

1. The study was limited to only 60 students.
2. The sample was restricted to Pune district.
3. Self-report tools may lead to biased responses.
4. Only selected variables were included in the study.

Suggestions:

1. Future research can include larger sample sizes.
2. Studies can be conducted in different regions.
3. More psychological variables can be included.
4. Experimental research can be conducted for deeper analysis.

Implications:

1. The study helps in understanding psychological factors affecting students.
2. It is useful for designing student counselling programs.
3. It helps teachers improve student confidence and awareness.
4. It contributes to improving decision-making skills among students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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