A Study of Business Administration College Students' Decision- Making Skills at Kuwait University

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the Decision- Making Skills and its relation with gender and academic level among Business Administration College students at Kuwait University. To fulfill this, A stratified sample of (200) Students was chosen from Business Administration College students. Results can be summarized as follows: The participants had medium level in most Decision- Making Skills. They showed a high level in suggesting alternatives skills and identifing the problem skill. They had low level of the consultation skill. There were no statistically significant differences in Decision- Making Skills among males and females. There were statistically significant differences in Decision- Making Skills related to the variable of academic level (first year, fourth year) in favor for the fourth year level.

Key words: Decision- Making Skills. Business Administration**.**

1. Introduction

Decision- Making Skills are an essential part of personal and professional life, since the individual can't solve problems and achieve adjustment without them. Edwards & Tversky (1967) defined Decision- Making Skills "as a process which is based on objectives that are to reach a particular decision by the selection and the comparing of alternatives and the possibilities available". While Sing (2000) and Anderson (1995) defined Decision- Making Skills "as a process of selecting an alternative among several alternatives in a specific position"**.** Russell & Brockman (2002) said that Decision-Making Skill is "a mental process through which the decision maker moves from the primary level of knowledge to the level of acceptance or rejection"**.**

Decision-making process includes the essential elements: "The Decision- Maker may be an individual or group, Alternatives, Extraneous factors, and the results of a decision". Decision-Making process is a dynamic process starting from the core the problem and ending with the selection and the implementation (Etoum, 2004), (Baron, 1990). Decision-Making process is influenced by many factors such as: The information in terms of accuracy, Decrease or increase, Experience, and Personal factors such as "competitive motives and conflicting values, interests, multiple talents, anxiety, poor self-confidence and low self-efficacy" (Rimawi, 2004). Decision-Making process is organized according to specific pattern, the first step is thinking and contemplation of all alternatives and available options, the second is asking multiple questions, third is the decision-making, finally, the implementation (Mahalingam, 2004), (Harrison& Bramson, 1982) .

According to the importance of the Decision- Making Skills many studies were conducted concerning its relationship with many variables, such as the academic specialization, academic achievement, academic level, gender and other variables. Gregory & Clemen (2001**)** and Rizk (2002) Pointed that Decision-Making Skills can be improved by training, also said that there were no differences between males and females in Decision-Making Skills. David & Maiyo (2010**)** conducted a study aimed to investigate the level of participation of adults in Decision-Making. The results indicated that (95%) of the sample participate in Decision-Making. The results also indicated that there were no differences between males and females in Decision-Making Skills.

2. Importance of study

It is a common belief among specialists in Business Administration College that Decision- Making Skills are associated with different variables. The present study specifically addresses the relationship between Decision-Making Skills and gender and academic level among Business Administration College students at Kuwait University. Hopefully, findings from this study would be helpful for specialists in Business Administration College at Kuwait University. Researcher hopes that the results come out to help evaluate the level of decision-making skills among the Business Administration College students at the University of Kuwait, and thus determine the effectiveness of adopted curriculum to develop these important skills.

3. Study Questions:

i. What is the level of Decision-Making Skills among the Business Administration College students' at Kuwait University?

ii. Are there statistically significant differences in the Decision-Making Skills attributed to gender and academic level?

4. Limitations

i. Results from this study would be limited by how valid and reliable are the instruments used.

ii. This study involved a sample recruited from Business Administration College students at Kuwait University enrolled during the academic year 2010/2011.

5. Methods

5.1 Participants

The population of the study consists of the whole Business Administration College students at Kuwait University enrolled during the academic year 2010/2011. The sample of study consists of (200) students selected randomly from Business Administration College students' at Kuwait University (first year, fourth year). Table (1) shows participant characteristics.

5.2 *Instrument*

The scale of decision-making skills Which prepared by Al-Tarawneh (2006) Was adopted in this study. For the purposes of the current study, the researcher investigates the reliability of the scale by test, re-test way, mid-term retail and internal consistency of the scale items, where the reliability coefficient (0.76), corrected mid-term retail stability coefficient (0.87) and the internal consistency coefficient (0.89).

This scale consists of (56) items measure eight basic Decision-Making Skills, The first skill is to identify and understand the problem, the second is to determine the goals, the third is to think of the requirements of decision-making, the fourth is the consultation with others, the fifth is to suggest alternatives, the sixth is the order of alternatives according to priority, the seventh is to choose the best alternative, the eighth is the implementation. Items of the scale were distributed concerning the eight skills, every seven items measure one skill. The amount of total score ranged among (56-280) degrees, the amount of sub-scores ranged among (7-35) degrees.

To explain the meaning of total score, It was divided into four levels as follows: score less than (112) refers to the low level of Decision-Making Skills, score among (112-167) refers to the average level of Decision-Making Skills, score among (168-223) refers to Decision-Making Skills level above-average, score more than (224) refers to the high level of Decision-Making Skills. To interpret the meaning of sub-degree, It was divided into four levels as follows: score less than (14) refers to the low level of Decision-Making Skill, score among (14-20) refers to the average level of Decision-Making Skill, score among (21-26) refers to above-average Decision-Making Skill level, score more than (27) refers to the high level of Decision-Making Skill.

5.3 *procedures*

After collecting data concerning Decision-Making Skills scale. The averages were calculated, and (2- way ANOVA) was used to analyses data.

6 Results

6.1 *Results related to question one:* "What is the level of Decision-Making Skills among the Business Administration College students' at Kuwait University?" To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for grades obtained by participants on the Decision-Making Skills scale as shown by table (2). Table (2) shows that participants have above-average level of Decision-Making Skills. They have a high level of suggesting alternatives skill and identifing & understanding the problem skill. Also shows they have above-average level of determining the goals skill, thinking of the requirements of decision-making skill, order of alternatives skill, and choosing the best alternative skill. And they have average level of implementation skill. But they have low level of consultation skill.

6. 2*: Results related to question two:* "Are there statistically significant differences in the Decision-Making Skills due to gender and academic level?". To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for grades obtained by participants on the Decision-Making Skills scale as shown by table (3). To check whether differences between means were statistically significant.

The (2- way ANOVA) was conducted, and table (4) shows related results. Table (4) shows there were no statistically significant differences in Decision- Making Skills among males and females, and there were statistically significant differences in Decision- Making Skills related to the variable of academic level (first year, fourth year) in favor for the fourth year students as shown by table (3).

8. Discussion

The results of the current study show that Business Administration College students at Kuwait University have high level of suggesting alternatives skill and identifing & understanding the problem skill. Also they have above-average level of determining the goals skill, thinking of the requirements of Decision-Making Skill, ordering of alternatives skill, and choosing the best alternative skill. And they have average level of implementation skill. But they have low level of consultation skill. This result is due to the nature of Business Administration College discipline, which requires special attention in the field of decision-making. Also curriculum that is taught to of Business Administration College students help develop decision-making, skills, so the participants received high grades on the decision-making skills scale. For the result which indicated that students have low level of consultation skill, this result is due to cultural factors related to Kuwaiti society which impacts negatively on practicing this skill, he or she may believe that consultation with other indicator of personal weakness, inefficiency and dependence.

On the other hand, the Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in Decision-Making Skills between males and females. This result due to the openness, awareness, high level of education and great attention to women in Kuwaiti society, which has reduced the differences between males and females in different areas, in general, and especially in Decision-Making Skills. Also results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in Decision- Making Skills related to the variable of academic level (first year, fourth year) in favor for the fourth year students. This result due to the special role of the courses that are studied by Business Administration College students, which, in turn, develop the decision-making skills, and this indicates the positive impact of these courses.

9. Conclusion

The conclusion of the current study is that Business Administration College Students at Kuwait University have above-average level of most decision-making skills, and they have a low level of consultation skill. Also there was positive impact of Business Administration College courses in improving decision-making skills among Business Administration College discipline Students. In light of the results that are concluded by this study, it is recommended to pay greater attention to developing decision-making skills among Business Administration College discipline Students at Kuwait University and in Universities in the communities that have the same culture. Also, more focus on the skill of consultation with others, Through planning of organized programs to remove the irrational ideas that limit development of this important skill. It must be taken into account when choosing a method of teaching, evaluation and academic guidance.

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Table 1. Participant characteristics.

Gender **Academic Level**	Males	Females	Total
First Year	50	50	100
Fourth Year	50	50	100
Total	100	100	

Table (2). Means and standard deviations of overall subject estimates on the Decision-Making Skills scale in decreasing order.

Decision-Making Skill	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision-Making Skill level
Total	200	211.4500	14.72725	Above-average
Suggest alternatives	200	28.5100	6.38543	High
Identify & understand the problem	200	27.0851	3.46521	High
Determine the goals	200	26.1550	3.39834	Above-average
Think of the requirements	200	25.3700	4.23827	Above-average
Order of alternatives	200	25.1950	5.41234	Above-average
Choose the best alternative	200	24.7450	6.28790	Above-average
Implementation	200	19.3250	8.61163	Average
Consultation with others	200	13.4750	4.93570	Low

Table (3). Means and standard deviations of overall subject estimates on the Decision-Making Skills scale by gender, academic level variables.

Academic level	**Gender**	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Fourth year	Male	215.8372	10.04497	50
	Female	211.9649	11.25034	50
	Total	213.6300	10.86804	100
First year	Male	208.6842	14.57267	50
	Female	210.0465	21.03280	50
	Total	209.2700	17.55733	100
Total	Male	211.7600	13.25135	100
	Female	211.1400	16.13016	100
	Total	211.4500	14.72725	200

Table (4). Results summary of the analysis of variance (2 way ANOVA).

Source	**Sum of squares**	**d f**	**Mean square**	**F**	**α**
Gender	77.207	1	77.207	.361	.549
Academic level	1008.467	1	1008.467	4.715	.031
Error	42133.813	197	213.877		
Total	8985382.000	200			