Tihana Đumić*
Alma Mater Europaea – ECM, University in Maribor, Slovenia
Doctoral study of Strategic Communication Management

Božidar Veljković**
Alma Mater Europaea – ECM, University in Maribor, Slovenia
Professor at Doctoral study of Strategic Communication Management

THE INTERACTION OF PERSONALITY AND COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLEX (BUSINESS) DECISION-MAKING

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This pilot study focused on the analysis of the decision-making process within a business context, examining the relationship between decision-making styles and individuals' personality traits. The aim of this paper is to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of workplace decision-making and to explore how the Big Five personality traits influence dominant decision-making styles. Preliminary results suggest that decision-making styles are not solely a consequence of one's job position, indicating that they are also, to some extent, shaped by individual personal characteristics. Although no statistically significant difference in decision-making styles were observed across various hierarchical positions within organisations, particularly in roles involving complex business decisions, data analysis reveals significant correlations between specific decision-making styles and personality traits. Despite certain discrepancies compared to previous studies, this research offers valuable insights into the organisational decision-making process, highlighting the complexity of the interaction between decision-making styles and personality traits. This study thus provides a foundation for the main study and for developing strategies to enhance decision-making processes in business environments.

Key words: complex business decision-making, personality traits, decision-making styles, organisational behaviour

1. Introduction

Global changes drive adjustments within organisations, requiring employees, especially managers, to make decisions amidst high levels of uncertainty, often involving various types of risk. Managers are challenged to choose options in situations where relevant information is scarce or contradictory, with time constraints and unpredictable decision outcomes. Such scenarios, common in leadership positions, contribute to stress and deviations from normative decision-making models (Klapproth, 2021).

A decision, defined as an act of will following judgement (Anić, 2007), often involves other individuals or the organisation (Oxford Learners Dictionaries, n.d.; Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), supporting the sociological perspective of Vroom and Jago (1974). The

* Alma Mater Europaea – EMC, Slovenska ulica 17, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia; e-mail: tihana2d@mail.com
** Alma Mater Europaea – EMC, Slovenska ulica 17, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia; e-mail: bozidar.veljkovic@siol.net

decision-making process is a systematic logic that facilitates decision-making (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.), the application of different decision-making models results in notable variations in analysis and outcomes (Nitta, 2023). This research focuses on the individual aspect of decision-making wirhin business environments, which presents a psychological, intellectual, and emotional challenge for the decision-maker.

1.1 Theoretical Consideration of the Decision-Making Process

Decision-making involves a conscious cognitive process of selecting among alternatives (APA, 2018; Koontz and Weihrich, 1990, p. 108 as cited in Sikavica, Pere, Bebek, Borna, Skoko, Hrvoje and Tipurić, Darko, 1999, p. 12) and responding to an identified problem (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 85). This process can range from simple daily choices to complex, long-term decisions (Steele and Stefánsson, 2020), aiming for the most favourable outcome. Decision-making occurs at all levels of life, driven by the need to resolve discrepancies between the current and desired state (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 85), achieving goals through available opportunities. Individuals continually engaged in identifying and resolving issues in both personal and business contexts, resulting in decision-making (Sikavica et al., 1999, p. 9, p. 13, p. 22).

Decision theories range from objective, rational models, where individuals with the same information make identical decisions, to subjective approaches that highlight the influence of specific contexts (Nitta, 2023). In organisations, decision-making is crucial and closely aligns management processes (Sikavica et al., 1999, p. 4). Decisions may be made individually or collectively, depending on the role within the organisation, with the quality of decisions depending on how situations are perceived (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 85).

Although decision theory is now a distinct academic field, its interdisciplinary nature provides a clearer understanding of decision-making processes.

1.2 Theoretical Background and Understanding of Factors Influencing Decision-Making

Early studies on employee traits were focused on job performance and cognitive abilities, while personality traits were largely overlooked (Barrick and Mount, 2005; Hough and Oswald, 2005 as cited in Jerneić et al., 2010). With the development of the five-factor personality model and meta-analysis methods in the 1980s, research on personality traits in the workplace significantly increased (Jerneić et al., 2010).

One of the earliest researchers of decision-making was Bernoulli, whose work on expected utility theory (EUT) in the 18th century laid the foundation for the later

development of the theory by von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944). This theory is used to explain various phenomena and serves as a normative theory for making optimal decisions (Klapproth, 2021). Although decisions were expected to be based on rationality, evidence indicates that people compare options and adjust their preferences depending on available alternatives (Klapproth, 2021). Moreover, people frequently conduct limited searches for information, relying on a small amount of data (Bröder, 2000).

1.2.1 Factors Influencing Decision-Making

Cognitive and Emotional Factors: The decision-making process is strongly influenced by cognitive and emotional factors. Perception, attention, and memory play a key role in processing information, while emotions, particularly positive ones, improve problem-solving skills and facilitate quick decision-making through heuristics (Park and Banaji, 2000). Emotions are also closely linked to motivation, affecting both the intensity and direction of effort put towards achieving goals, and they directly impact work enthusiasm (Pinder, 2014, p. 13; Erez and Isen, 2002; Tsai et al., 2007). It is important to note that all these factors can manifest at the level of the individual, the object of observation, or the perceptual context, such as the work environment (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 81).

Motivation and Values: Employee motivation depends on a combination of individual characteristics and work conditions, such as the level of autonomy and feedback systems (Robbins and Judge, 2014, pp. 115-130). Personal values, like motives, shape perception and behaviour; they influence an individual's life goals and attitudes and play a crucial role in the degree of conformity within the organisational context (Schwartz, 1992; Robbins and Judge, 2014, pp. 78-79).

Perception and Attitudes: Perception, defined as the process of interpreting information from the environment, is shaped by attitudes, personality, and past experiences (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 80). Attitudes, which represent stable affective responses to objects and social issues, are directly influenced by personal values (Vrselja, 2022).

1.2.2 IPIP and the Big Five Personality Model

The International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), developed under the leadership of Wim K. B. Hofstee at the University of Groningen, is based on the "lexical hypothesis," which assumes that the most significant differences among people are reflected in the language of a region (Hendriks, A. A., Jolijn, Hofstee, Willem K. B., and De Raad, Boele, 1999; Goldberg, 1981). To minimise subjective interpretation, the team opted for concrete

behavioural phrases rather than descriptive adjectives. The IPIP is closely connected to the Big Five personality model, measuring five major dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability (Goldberg, 1993). The use of IPIP has significantly contributed to research on individual differences.

1.3 The Decision-Making Process in Light of Individual Characteristics

Earlier research primarily focused on external factors and situational characteristics affecting decision-making, with less emphasis on the traits of decision-makers themselves (Scott and Bruce, 1995). However, recent studies have increasingly focused on individual differences in decision-making (Mohammed and Schwall, 2009; Armstrong, Cools, and Sadler-Smith, 2012), highlighting the importance of decision-making styles, particularly in managerial roles (Dalal and Brooks, 2014). Decision-making styles, defined as habitual patterns in decision-making (Driver, 1990 as cited in Scott and Bruce, 1995), involve cognitive skills such as self-regulation and self-evaluation, which influence the quality of decisions (Wood and Highhouse, 2014). Leadership styles, such as autocratic or democratic, are closely linked to decision-making styles, which depend on the characteristics of both the decision-maker and the broader organisational context (Sikavica et al., 1999, pp. 32-33).

Assessing the quality of decisions is not straightforward, as a positive outcome does not always correlate with an effective decision-making process (Clemen and Terence, 2004, pp. 3-4). Research indicates that humans do not consistently adhere to decision analysis models, instead relying on intuition in daily decisions with minimal consequences. However, incorrect decisions in organisational contexts can have far-reaching negative effects (Sikavica et al., 1999, pp. 10-12). In complex business environments, quantitative methods are frequently employed to aid decision-making, although human judgment and subjective factors, in accordance with Simon’s "administrative man" model, remain crucial (Sikavica et al., 1999, pp. 6-18).

Despite the use of decision analysis models, biases, insufficient information, or organisational constraints can hinder effective decision-making (Robbins and Judge, 2014, p. 91). While heuristics were once seen as prone to errors, more recent research suggests they can lead to more accurate decisions than optimisation models (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier, 2011; Klapproth, 2021).

1.3.1 The Role of Cognitive and Decision-Making Styles

Cognitive styles, which describe consistent individual differences in information processing, have been central to research on decision-making (Kozhevnikov, 2007). These styles influence how individuals gather and process information, and are closely related to decision-making styles (Scott and Bruce, 1995). Decision-making styles, including rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous, are learned patterns that reflect tendencies in specific contexts rather than fixed personality traits (Scott and Bruce, 1995). Rational decision-makers thoroughly analyse information, while intuitive ones rely more on feelings and emotions (Scott and Bruce, 1995; Thunholm, 2004).

1.3.2 Big Five and Decision-Making

Numerous studies have found correlations between the Big Five personality traits and decision-making styles. For example, conscientiousness is often linked to a rational decision-making style, while openness to experience may be associated with intuitive decision-making (Wood and Highhouse, 2014; Narooi and Karazee, 2015; Bayram and Aydemir-Dev, 2017; Juanchich et al., 2016; Ülgen et al., 2016). These traits shape how individuals approach complex decision-making tasks, especially in leadership roles, where responsibility and risk are heightened.

1.3.3 Risk and Decision-Making

Risk-taking in decision-making is influenced by a combination of individual factors, such as personality and demographic characteristics, as well as contextual variables (Figner and Weber, 2011). Research indicates that men and younger individuals are generally more inclined to take risks than women (Zuckerman and Kuhlman, 2000; Nicholson et al., 2005). Within the organisational context, risky decisions can have widespread implications, necessitating a systematic approach and careful evaluation, particularly for managers (Figner and Weber, 2011).

Predicting differences in decision-making competence based on personality traits, particularly within the framework of the Big Five model, helps explain why some individuals may struggle to face challenges in complex situations despite possessing high levels of education and experience. This understanding is crucial for improving decision-making processes in managerial positions.

2. Research Methodology

The theoretical approach is grounded in scientific literature and findings from relevant studies on the topic. In the empirical part of the research, questionnaires were used to gather demographic data, general information on decision-making, and two integrated surveys (both fully available in the Appendix), which participants could complete via a Google Docs form over a period of 20 days, from 25 January to 15 February 2024. The "snowball sampling" method was employed for data collection.

2.1. Participants

The study included 72 participants, with a higher proportion of women than men (66% versus 44%), predominantly aged between 41 and 50 years (44%) and between 31 and 40 years (31%). Nearly equal numbers of participants were in the age groups of 51-60 and 18-30 years, with the fewest participants aged 61-70 years (3%). The largest group of participants indicated they held middle management positions — responsible for implementing strategies selected by superiors and maintaining good interpersonal relations — comprising 46% of the sample. Twenty-three percent identified themselves as holding senior management roles — responsible for overseeing the entire organisation's operations, setting goals, and choosing business strategies — while 31% were in non-decision-making roles within their organisations. Fifty-nine percent of participants considered themselves proficient in decision-making, 14% enjoyed making decisions that impact others, while a larger proportion (21%) preferred not to make such decisions.

2.2. Research Instruments

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in shorter versions of personality questionnaires (McCrae and Costa, 2007; Thalmayer, Amber Gayle, Saucier, Gerard and Eigenhuis, Annemarie, 2011; Baldasaro, Ruth E., Shanahani, Michael J., Bauer, Daniel J., 2013), which consistently demonstrate satisfactory metric characteristics (for more details, see Saucier, 1994; Gosling, Samuel D., Rentfrow, Peter J. and Swann, William B. Jr., 2003; Donnellan, M. Brent, Oswald, Frederick L., Baird, Brendan M. and Lucas, Richard E., 2006; Thalmayer et al., 2011; Rammstedt, 2007. These shorter questionnaires reduce the likelihood of participant fatigue, subsequent dropout, careless responding to items, or random selection of responses (Thalmayer et al., 2011). Other advantages of shorter questionnaire versions include lower research costs and reduced completion time (Herzberg and Brähler, 2006), which are particularly desirable in time-constrained studies (Gosling et al., 2003). Additionally, they provide a practical solution in situations where respondents

may have difficulty reading (McCrae and Costa, 2007), necessitating personality examination.

This study utilised the shortened version of the IPIP-50 personality questionnaire (Goldberg, 1999) and the Mini-IPIP (Donnellan et al., 2006) , both of which are available in the public domain. Like other derivatives of the IPIP, this abbreviated version serves to assess five key personality dimensions - extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and intellect (Goldberg, 1999), comprising 20 items with each dimension represented by four statements in the questionnaire. As a self-report personality inventory (Anastasi and Urbina, 2016, p. 348), participants provided their judgments on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". The questionnaire was translated from English to Croatian freely and in accordance with standard Croatian language, with items arranged in the same order as in Donnellan et al. (2006).

Despite various classifications of decision-making styles available in the literature (see Harren, 1979; Phillips et al., 1984), this research selected the classification by Scott and Bruce (1995) as the second measurement instrument: the General Decision Making Style Questionnaire (GDMS). This choice was based on its demonstrated psychometric properties (Topolewska, Ewa, Skimina, Ewa, Strus, Włodzimierz, Cieciuch, Jan and Rowinski, Tomasz, 2014; Donnellan, 2006) and its widespread use in prior studies (Gambetti and Giusberti, 2019), making it accessible to the general public. The GDMS assesses five different decision-making styles — rational, intuitive, avoiding, dependent, and spontaneous — consisting of 25 items, with five for each style. Participants self-assessed using a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". The questionnaire was translated from English to Croatian freely in accordance with standard Croatian language, with items listed in the same order as in the original.

2.3. Issues

RQ-1: Examine the correlation between fundamental personality traits and decision-making styles within the context of complex business decisions.

RQ-2: Determine whether differences exist in predominant decision-making styles between individuals in leadership positions within an organisation and those in roles that do not involve complex business decision-making.

2.4. Hypotheses

H1: There will be a correlation between personality traits and specific decision-making styles. The rational style will be positively correlated with conscientiousness, intellect, and

agreeableness, and negatively correlated with neuroticism. The intuitive style will be positively correlated with extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, and negatively correlated with neuroticism. The spontaneous style will be positively correlated with extraversion, and negatively correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intellect. The avoiding style will be positively correlated with neuroticism, and negatively correlated with conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and intellect. The dependent style will be positively correlated with neuroticism and agreeableness, and negatively correlated with intellect and conscientiousness.

H2: Individuals in managerial positions use the rational decision-making style more frequently than individuals in positions that do not involve complex business decisions.

H3: Individuals in non-managerial positions more frequently use the intuitive decision-making style and are more dependent on the opinions of their colleagues at work compared to individuals in managerial positions.

3. Results

For the purposes of testing hypotheses and exploring the research questions posed, the analysis and interpretation of collected data were conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Decision-Making Styles

	INTUITIVE STYLE		**DEPENDENT STYLE**		**RATIONAL STYLE**		**AVOIDANT STYLE**		**SPONTANEOUS STYLE**	
	0	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**
Arithmetic Mean	18.952	19	19.81	19.694	22.095	22.204	13.905	11.755	9.524	9.735
Standard Deviation	3.106	2.492	3.108	3.483	2.7	2.432	4.277	4.352	3.763	3.74
Skewness Index	-0.471	-0.067	-0.268	-1.271	-0.566	-0.755	0.509	0.524	0.418	0.732
Standard Error of Skewness	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34
Kurtosis Index	-0.001	-0.06	-0.892	2.911	-0.964	-0.413	-0.386	-0.16	-0.661	-0.236
Standard Error of Kurtosis	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668
Shapiro-Wilk test	0.932	0.978	0.94	0.901	0.881	0.892	0.952	0.959	0.917	0.918
p value for S-W	0.148	0.481	0.222	< .001	0.015	< .001	0.373	0.083	0.076	0.002

*__0__ –do not make complex business decisions; __1__ – make complex business decisions

From Table 1. it can be observed that the results of both participant groups (those involved in making complex business decisions within the organisation and those who do not) exhibit asymmetrical distributions. The standard errors of skewness are relatively small, suggesting that the estimates are quite reliable. Kurtosis values indicate flattened distributions, ranging from mildly to markedly concentrated around the central value. The standard errors of kurtosis are also generally small, indicating relatively reliable kurtosis estimates. Shapiro-Wilk test values are relatively high for each dataset, indicating that the distributions of these variables tend to be normal. A statistically significant difference from a normal distribution is only observed for four datasets: the dependent (S-W = 0.901, $p < .001$) and rational decision-making styles (S-W = 0.892, $p < .001$) among individuals in leadership positions, rational decision-making style among participants not making complex business decisions (S-W = 0.881, $p < .015$), and the spontaneous decision-making style among individuals in leadership positions (S-W = 0.918, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Descriptive Data for Personality Traits

	extraversion		**agreeableness**		**conscientiousness**		**neuroticism**		**introversion**	
	0	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**
Arithmetic Mean	7.286	6.612	9.333	8.551	6.619	6.939	6.667	5.939	2.762	2.204
Standard Deviation	2.125	1.869	1.528	1.849	2.012	1.651	2.106	2.035	2.047	1.893
Skewness Index	0.243	-0.164	0.582	-0.352	-0.314	-0.043	-0.258	-0.316	0.471	0.136
Standard Error of Skewness	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34	0.501	0.34
Kurtosis Index	0.029	-0.281	-0.785	-0.109	-1.074	0.14	-0.589	0.266	2.007	0.843
Standard Error of Kurtosis	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668	0.972	0.668
Shapiro-Wilk test	0.965	0.964	0.888	0.961	0.92	0.96	0.931	0.962	0.888	0.944
p value for S-W	0.628	0.142	0.02	0.1	0.085	0.095	0.141	0.116	0.02	0.021

*__0__ – do not make complex business decisions; __1__ – make complex business decisions

From Table 2. it can be inferred that the results for both groups of participants (those within the organisation who make complex business decisions and those who do not) are generally asymmetrically distributed, with only a few values evenly dispersed around the mean. The positive kurtosis values (0.029, 0.140, 0.266, 0.843, 2.007) suggest pronounced kurtosis, indicating that values are clustered around the mean with fewer

extreme values ; the remaining data sets similarly exhibit kurtotic distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk test values are relatively high across each data set, suggesting that the distributions of these variables tend towards normality. However, a significant difference deviation from normal distribution is found in the datasets pertaining to agreeableness among individuals not making complex business decisions (S-W=0.888, p<.020) and introversion for both group (S-W=0.888, p<.020; S-W=0.944, p<.021). An analysis of the skewness and kurtosis indices, along with their standard errors, as well as the Shapiro-Wilk test results in both tables, suggests that parametric statistical methods are appropriate for data analysis in this study.

Table 3. T-Test for independent samples

T-Test for independent samples			
	t	**df**	**p**
INTUITIVE STYLE	-0.068	68	0.946
DEPENDENT STYLE	0.131	68	0.896
RATIONAL STYLE	-0.166	68	0.869
AVOIDANT STYLE	1.903	68	0.061
SPONTANEOUS STYLE	-0.216	68	0.830
EXTRAVERSION	-1.326	68	0.189
AGREEABLENESS	1.704	68	0.093
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	-0.695	68	0.490
NEUROTICISM	1.357	68	0.179
INTROVERSION	1.103	68	0.274
*Student t-test			

Based on the results presented in Table 3. it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the two participant groups — those who make complex business decisions and those whose roles do not encompass such responsibilities. Consequently, hypotheses 2 and 3 are not supported.

Table 4 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Variable		INTUITIVE STYLE	DEPENDENT STYLE	RATIONAL STYLE	AVOIDANT STYLE	SPONTANEOUS STYLE	EXTRAVERSION	AGREEABLENESS	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	NEUROTICISM	INTROVERSION
1. INTUITIVE STYLE	Pearson's r	—									
	p-value	—									
2. DEPENDENT STYLE	Pearson's r	0.259 *	—								
	p-value	0.031	—								
3. RATIONAL STYLE	Pearson's r	0.07	0.122	—							
	p-value	0.565	0.316	—							
4. AVOIDANT STYLE	Pearson's r	0.174	0.385 **	-0.01	—						
	p-value	0.149	0.001	0.933	—						
5. SPONTANEOUS STYLE	Pearson's r	0.132	0.095	-0.337 **	0.184	—					
	p-value	0.275	0.434	0.004	0.128	—					
6. EXTRAVERSION	Pearson's r	0.116	0.105	0.06	-0.166	-0.016	—				
	p-value	0.339	0.388	0.622	0.17	0.892	—				
7. AGREEABLENESS	Pearson's r	0.285 *	0.252 *	0.21	0.26 *	-0.035	0.187	—			
	p-value	0.017	0.036	0.081	0.03	0.775	0.12	—			
8. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	Pearson's r	0.194	0.057	0.251 *	-0.037	0.012	0.147	0.137	—		
	p-value	0.107	0.642	0.036	0.763	0.922	0.224	0.258	—		
9. NEUROTICISM	Pearson's r	0.108	0.094	-0.095	0.247 *	0.124	0.014	0.19	0.039	—	
	p-value	0.373	0.439	0.434	0.039	0.308	0.905	0.116	0.75	—	
10. INTROVERSION	Pearson's r	-0.097	0.085	0.035	0.179	-0.113	0.297 *	0.207	-0.055	0.44 ***	—
	p-value	0.425	0.486	0.777	0.139	0.351	0.013	0.085	0.652	< .001	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

From Table 4. it can be observed that the dependent decision-making style is positively correlated with the intuitive (r = 0.259, p < .031) and avoidant (r = 0.385, p < .001) styles, while it is negatively correlated with the rational and spontaneous styles (r = -0.337, p < .004). Among the personality traits, extraversion and introversion (r = 0.297, p < .013) as well as introversion and neuroticism (r = 0.440, p < .001) are positively

correlated. The rational decision-making style is positively correlated with conscientiousness ($r = 0.251$, $p < .036$), the intuitive style with agreeableness ($r = 0.285$, $p < .017$), while the spontaneous decision-making style is not correlated with any personality traits. The avoidant style is positively correlated with neuroticism ($r =0 .247$, $p < .039$) and agreeableness ($r = 0.260$, $p < .030$), and the dependent style is only correlated with agreeableness ($r = 0.252$, $p < .036$). From the above, it is evident that the first hypothesis is only partially confirmed.

4. Discussion

Most contemporary theorists would agree with the definition of personality as a factor contributing to the consistency in individuals' behaviour (Loevinger and Knoll, 1983). According to the currently dominant model, personality is viewed as a complex system composed of various hierarchically organised traits, with personality traits being characteristics that define a person and significantly impact their behaviour. Hence, it can be posited that personality traits are responsible for maintaining behavioural consistency over time (Conley, 1984; Costa and McCrae, 1988) and across different situations and contexts (Argyle and Little, 1972). This paradigm implies that personality traits primarily influence individuals' behaviour in various business situations, including those requiring decision-making, and thus differentiate individuals who navigate complex business environments more or less effectively.

The results of this study suggest that not only is each decision-making style associated with certain personality traits, but some styles are also interrelated. Specifically, a positive correlation was observed between the intuitive and dependent styles ($r = 0.259$), the dependent and avoidant styles ($r = 0.385$), while a negative correlation between the rational and spontaneous decision-making styles ($r = -0.337$). Interestingly, regardless of whether the participants hold positions in their organisations that require complex business decision-making or not, they generally reported using both the intuitive and rational decision-making styles. The highest number of participants acknowledged that their decision-making style is dependent, indicating a tendency to rely on others when making decisions. This decision-making style is suitable for employees in lower managerial positions or those who do not bear the responsibility of making demanding business decisions (Ramiro, 2022), whereas it is not highly valued within the narrower circle of "top management".

A positive correlation between the intuitive and dependent decision-making styles may suggest that individuals who rely on intuition often feel the need for additional

reassurance through external sources of information. This raises the question of whether such a combination of styles is optimal in all situations or if it might lead to increased uncertainty. In organisational contexts, it may be helpful to examine how productive reliance on both intuition and external advice is, or whether it could hinder final decision-making, especially in complex scenarios. Similarly, the positive correlation between the dependent and avoidant styles may indicate that individuals who seek validation and support often experience discomfort or insecurity when making decisions, which may lead them to avoid situations requiring quick or autonomous decisions. In complex business environments that demand rapid responses, this combination of styles could have negative consequences, particularly in situations that require decisiveness and initiative. Such a style may slow organisational processes or result in the abandonment projects that call for prompt action. The negative correlation between the rational and spontaneous styles suggests that individuals with a rational approach tend to avoid impulsive decisions, which can be beneficial in complex, high-risk situations. However, this raises the question of whether an overly rational approach might impede quick reactions in situations requiring flexibility and adaptability. In fast-paced business environments, spontaneity can be essential for seizing opportunities, while an overly rational approach may reduce organisational agility.

Many previous studies have confirmed the relationship between some of the "Big Five" personality traits and various decision-making styles (see Wood and Highhouse 2014; Narooi and Karazee 2015; Bayram and Aydemir-Dev 2017; Juanchich et al. 2015; Ülgen et al. 2016, etc.). For instance, findings reveal a positive correlation between the rational style and conscientiousness, with correlations ranging from r = 0.32 (Narooi and Karazee, 2015) to r = 0.49 (Wood and Highhouse, 2014). In this study, the correlation is smaller (r = 0.251) but still significant. Previous studies have shown a low positive relationship has been observed between the rational decision-making style and intellect (Juanchich et al. 2015; Wood and Highhouse 2014; Narooi and Karazee 2015; Dewberry et al. 2013; Bayram and Aydemir 2017), as well as between the rational style and agreeableness (Juanchich et al. 2015; Wood and Highhouse 2014; Dewberry et al. 2013). The relationship between the rational style and neuroticism has been found to be negative in prior research (Wood and Highhouse 2014; Juanchich et al. 2015; Ülgen et al. 2016), which was also assumed in this study; however, these correlations were not found in this research. Previous findings also indicate a low positive correlation between the intuitive style and extraversion (Wood and Highhouse, 2014; Narooi and Karazee 2015), which was also assumed in this study as well,

but this association was not found, although the relationship with agreeableness was confirmed (r = 0.285).

The spontaneous style has shown a low positive association with extraversion (Juanchich et al. 2015; Dewberry et al. 2013) and a negative association with agreeableness (Wood and Highhouse 2014; Juanchich et al. 2015) and conscientiousness (Bayram and Aydemir, 2017; Wood and Highhouse, 2014). Similar predictions were made in this study, but they were not confirmed. In this study, the finding by Wood and Highhouse (2014) of a negative association between the spontaneous decision-making style and conscientiousness was not replicated, nor was this association confirmed in the studies by Dewberry et al. (2013) and Juanchich et al. (2016), which employed different measures of the same decision-making styles.

The negative association between the avoidant style and conscientiousness has also been identified in previous studies, with correlations ranging from r = -0.26 (Ülgen et al. 2016) to r = -0.54 (Juanchich et al. 2015); however, this was not confirmed in the current study. Additionally, some of the studies mentioned provide compelling evidence of a positive relationship between the avoidant style and neuroticism, with correlations ranging from r = 0.27 (Wood and Highhouse 2014) to r = 0.53 (Dewberry et al. 2013). In this study, the avoidant style also showed a significant positive correlation with neuroticism (r = 0.247). Research by Dewberry et al. (2013) and Bayram and Aydemir (2017), as well as Juanchich et al. (2015), indicates a negative correlation between the avoidant style and extraversion, though no such correlation was found in this case.

The results of this study regarding the relationship between intellect and decision-making styles differ from expectations, contrasting with findings from previous studies that measured openness (Dewberry et al. 2013; Juanchich et al. 2016; Wood and Highhouse 2014). No correlation, positive or negative, was observed between intellect and either the avoidant or dependent styles. Finally, the dependent decision-making style has shown a positive correlation with neuroticism in previous studies (Wood and Highhouse 2014; Bayram and Aydemir 2017; Dewberry et al. 2013), which was not the case in this study. While other researchers have found positive associations between the dependent decision-making style and agreeableness and neuroticism, as well as negative associations between the avoidant decision-making style and agreeableness (Dewberry et al. 2013; Juanchich et al. 2016; Wood and Highhouse 2014), this study was only able to partially replicate these results – for the dependent style and agreeableness (r = 0.252) and the avoidant style and agreeableness (r = 0.260).

Research into the influence of decision-making styles on leadership styles has illuminated their mutual impact. It has been demonstrated that the rational and intuitive decision-making styles positively impact transformational leadership, whereas the avoidant decision-making style has a negative influence (Shujaat, Jawwad, Riaz, Muhammad and Humaira, Yasmin, 2021). Additionally, the rational, intuitive, and dependent decision-making styles positively predict transactional leadership, which is based on reward and punishment (Ng, 2024). In contrast, the avoidant decision-making style positively affects, and the rational and spontaneous styles negatively affect, the laissez-faire leadership style (Shujaat et al., 2021). Regardless of their position within the organisation, the majority of participants were characterised by agreeableness and extraversion. Additionally, although to a slightly lesser extent, conscientiousness and neuroticism were also prevalent, while introversion was the least common trait.

Although Erceg's (2023) research suggests that appointing individuals who make decisions rationally to the head of an organisation can yield numerous positive outcomes for companies and their employees, and Fortune and Nwinee Barisua's (2019) study indicates the necessity of adopting concepts that ensure rationality and efficiency in the decision-making process for the decision-makers, this study did not confirm any difference in preferential decision-making style between those in managerial positions and those who are not. Interestingly, emotional intelligence, specifically its component of self-awareness, plays a significant role in predicting the rational decision-making style of (sports) managers (Nowzari, 2015). Conversely, Hadizadeh M., Akram, Tehrani, Maryam and Amin, Fereshteh’s (2011) research reveals a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and both the rational and avoidant decision-making styles, but a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the intuitive decision-making style among managers in the oil industry. Cook and Gonzales's (2016) study on Australians in senior management positions corroborates the notion that experienced managers prioritise deliberation over intuition when making decisions. Research findings indicate that social awareness has the greatest impact on predicting the intuitive decision-making style among sports managers (Nowzari, 2015). The intuitive decision-making style has also been identified as a protective factor for mental health (Bavolar and Orosová, 2015). Data analysis in Nowzari's (2015) study showed that no component of emotional intelligence plays a role in the dependent decision-making style of sports managers, whereas Allwood and Salo's (2012) findings pointed to a correlation between the avoidant and dependent decision-making styles and increased stress.

The reasons for the obtained results can be partly explained by the insufficient diversity of the sample, which may have resulted in a lack of variability to in distinguishing decision-making styles across different hierarchical positions. Additionally, the cultural context can also play a significant role in shaping the results. In certain organisational cultures, specific decision-making styles may be preferred or even standardised, regardless of individual differences or employees' hierarchical positions. Organisations with highly structured or procedural cultures may encourage employees at all levels to adopt similar decision-making patterns that align with organisational norms and rules. In such contexts, even employees with more distinct individual styles may feel pressured to adapt their decision-making to conform to organisational standards. This raises important questions about the extent to which the work environment can "suppress" natural personality traits and influence employee behaviour.

Alternatively, the results may suggest that certain personality traits according to the Big Five model – such as conscientiousness, openness, or emotional stability – play a greater role in shaping decision-making styles than one's hierarchical position within the organisation. This could indicate that some individuals may be "predisposed" to a particular decision-making style due to their personality traits, making them less susceptible to the influence of hierarchical position.

In addition, external factors, such as the post-pandemic era in which we live, which have led to changes in working practices and market demands, which may also homogenise decision-making styles within an organisation, regardless of employees' hierarchical positions. Furthermore, cultural factors specific to Croatia may shape the way people express and perceive personality traits and how they develop decision-making styles in business environments. Thus, the results may reflect a cultural tendency that is not necessarily present in other countries, where certain traits may be valued and manifested differently, depending on the social and cultural context.

4.1. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

Although the Mini-IPIP generally demonstrates satisfactory criterion validity, the absence of correlations between certain decision-making styles and personality traits can be attributed to the methodological limitations of this study — specifically, the sampling method and the resulting sample bias and limited heterogeneity. The sampling method used may lead to sample bias, as participants may come from the same networks or similar work environments, which can reduce diversity in decision-making styles, especially if participants are already influenced by organisational norms that shape their decision-

making approaches. Additionally, variations in the results may, to some extent, be explained by the lower reliability of the "Big Five" personality dimensions measured by the Mini-IPIP questionnaire compared to longer personality questionnaires, or may be the result of measurement methodology variations. For this reason, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution. For the main study, as well as future research, it is recommended to use more comprehensive questionnaires and larger sample sizes, which are expected to yield a more reliable representation of the relationship between personality traits and decision-making styles in the business context. Further research is needed to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of this relationship and to explore the possible influence of other, previously mentioned factors on the decision-making process in the business context.

In this context, it is essential to investigate the conditions under which different combinations of decision-making styles enhance team effectiveness and those under which they may act as obstacles. Examining these conditions could assist organisations in optimising team dynamics and provide insight into which styles best suit various business requirements. It is also recommended to explore interventions that could help employees recognise their own decision-making preferences and adapt them to specific business situations. Training programmes that enable employees to become more aware of their decision-making styles and adapt them to different work contexts could have a positive impact on team dynamics and effectiveness. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to investigate which forms of training may be most helpful for employees depending on the work environment, as well as the influence of decision-making styles on employee well-being and mental health, with an emphasis on long-term satisfaction and workplace well-being.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that influences on human behaviour are a dynamic and complex set of external and internal, interdependent variables, which inherently complicates understanding and forecasting human actions. Nevertheless, certain patterns exist that allow for some degree of prediction regarding human behaviour, both in daily life and in professional settings. Among these patterns, personality traits serve as relatively stable characteristics of human reactions across various situations. However, this study points to only a partial connection between personality traits and decision-making styles, without significant differences in the dominant decision-making style across different organisational positions. These findings may result from the complexity of the interaction between

personality traits and decision-making styles, as well as from various factors influencing decision-making within organisations.

It appears that other factors, such as organisational culture and norms, as well as the context in which decisions are made, may play a more significant role in shaping the dominant decision-making style, regardless of individual's hierarchical position within the organisation. Furthermore, individual differences—such as varied personal experiences, motivations, and goals—contribute to variations in results and significantly impact decision-making. External factors, including the current organisational climate or cultural and societal norms, may also exert considerable influence. These elements were not considered in this study but are recommended for future research, as they could have implications for improving organisational practices and employee development strategies, especially in an increasingly complex and changing business environment.

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Appendix

1.1 GDMS Decision-Making Styles Questionnaire (Scott & Bruce 1995)

Instructions:

Read the statements below and circle the number that best represents the extent to which you agree with each statement or how you usually behave. A response of 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement, while a response of 5 means you strongly agree.

Items:

1. When making decisions, I rely on my intuition.
2. I rarely make important decisions without consulting other people.
3. When I make a decision, it's more important to feel that it's right than to have a rational reason for it.
4. Before making decisions, I double-check my information sources to ensure I have the correct facts.
5. I use other people's advice when making important decisions.
6. I delay making decisions because thinking about them makes me uncomfortable.
7. I make decisions in a logical and systematic way.
8. When making decisions, I go with the first thing that comes to mind.
9. I tend to make snap decisions.
10. I like to be guided in the right direction when faced with important decisions.
11. My decision-making requires careful thought.
12. When making decisions, I trust my inner feelings and reactions.
13. When I make a decision, I consider different options related to a specific goal.
14. I avoid making important decisions as long as I'm under pressure.
15. I often make impulsive decisions.
16. When making decisions, I rely on my instincts.
17. I generally make decisions that I believe are right.
18. I often need help from others when making important decisions.
19. I delay making decisions whenever possible.
20. I often make decisions quickly.
21. I frequently delay making important decisions.
22. I find it easier to make important decisions with others' support.
23. I generally only make important decisions when I am obliged to do so.
24. I make decisions quickly.
25. My decisions are usually based on a rational foundation.

1.2 Mini-IPIP Personality Traits Questionnaire (Donnellan et al., 2006)

Instructions:

Read the statements below and circle the number that best represents the extent to which you agree with each statement. Describe yourself as you see yourself now in relation to other people you know of the same gender and around the same age, rather than how you would like to be in the future. A response of 1 means you strongly disagree, while a response of 5 means you strongly agree with the statement.

Items:

1. I bring energy to a party.
2. I empathise with others.
3. I get household chores done right away.
4. I frequently change my mood.
5. I have a vivid imagination.
6. I don’t talk much.
7. I’m not interested in other people’s problems.
8. I often forget to put things back in their place.
9. I’m generally relaxed.
10. I’m not interested in abstract ideas.
11. I talk to a lot of different people at parties.
12. I feel others’ emotions.
13. I like things to be in order.
14. I get upset easily.
15. I find it difficult to understand abstract ideas.
16. I keep to myself.
17. I’m not really interested in other people.
18. I make a mess.
19. I’m rarely sad.
20. I don’t have much imagination.